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ABSTRACT

This document consists of the two issues of the biannual serial "Rural Libraries" published during 1992. The issues contain three articles and seven speeches and conference papers. The articles describe: (1) how strong community support led to the development of a library on the Glasgow campus of Western Kentucky University; (2) a report of the results of a national survey of state library agencies on the availability of continuing educational opportunities for rural librarians; and (3) a library consultant's perspective on the relationships between small-town libraries and their communities. Conference papers cover: (1) testimony presented at the White House Conference on Library and Information Services (July 1991) on the condition of rural public libraries and the need for funding and educational opportunities for rural librarians; (2) the role of libraries and librarians in supporting rural development efforts and decision making; (3) the role of information in rural economic development; (4) the USDA's Rural Information Center and its implementation of a rural health information service; (5) training in transformational leadership skills as part of rural community development; (6) uses of state information resources and the North Carolina information network; and (7) the role of schools in supporting rural infrastructure and promoting rural development. (SV)

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rural libraries

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CENTER FOR THE STUDY
OF RURAL LIBRARIANSHIP

RURAL LIBRARIES
Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship
Department of Library Science
166 Carlson Building
Clarion University of Pennsylvania
Clarion, Pennsylvania 16214

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RURAL LIBRARIES

Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship Director:
BERNARD VAVREK

Editor:
MARY LOU PRATT

Editorial Committee:
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TIM LYNCH

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ANNE DENIO

Subscription Manager:
SUSAN HILL

1992, Department of Library Science, Clarion University of Pa, Clarion, PA 16214

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Civic Spirit Spurs Satellite: A Tale of an Off-Campus Library Sally Ann Strickler	1
White House Conference on Library & Information Services John D. Hales, Jr.	13
Survey of Continuing Education Opportunities for Rural Librarians Mlou Williams	19
What Small Town Public Libraries Mean to Their Communities: A Consultant's Perspective Gardner Hanks	49

Civic Spirit Spurs Satellite: A Tale of an Off-Campus Library

Sally Ann Strickler

Western Kentucky University Libraries

The fall 1990 opening of Western Kentucky University's Glasgow Campus Library, located 30 miles from the main campus, personifies the important premise that service to extended campus students must be of an equivalent qualitative degree to that provided on the main campus. This account of the nearly three years of planning preceding the opening of the Glasgow Campus Library includes the primary ingredient behind the successful opening: the raising of over $100,000 for library materials by the citizens of the Glasgow area. And quite a story it is, a story of vision and hard work, an impressive show of community support for higher education and library services.

Our review begins in 1884 when the Glasgow Normal School moved from Glasgow to Bowling Green and in 1892 became part of the Western Kentucky State Normal School, now Western Kentucky University. Through the years many in Glasgow continued to hope in vain for a college in their town.

By 1967 the idea of establishing such a college was presented to the Glasgow city council, which endorsed the proposal unanimously along with all local civic organizations and area school officials. A presentation was made to the Kentucky Council on Public Higher Education without success.

Shortly after, a bill was introduced in the Kentucky Legislature which

approved authorization to establish the Glasgow Community College as a branch of the University of Kentucky. Although approved, it was never funded.

There was never any visible concerted effort concerning the Community College. In the late 1970s, local interested individuals approached representatives of the Linsdey Wilson College in nearby Columbia, Kentucky, about the possibility of moving the campus to Glasgow. That effort was not successful either.

Meanwhile, WKU's extended campus program became a major emphasis of the University, and during the past decades Western has offered extended campus courses in the Glasgow region in a variety of facilities including high school classrooms, hospital conference rooms, public library meeting rooms, and shopping centers.

WKU had an uneven history of library services to students enrolled in extended campus classes, ranging from intermittent to non-existent with service varying from transporting numerous duplicate copies to classes checking out specific titles to the traveling professor who was responsible for the books being circulated to students. Most extended campus students were left with little or no library service. They had the option to travel miles to use the main WKU campus libraries or to use often meager resources found in area colleges, public and vocational schools, and public libraries. In no way was WKU offering quality library services to the extended campus students.

Early in 1987 WKU's extended campus library service was reviewed as it related to statements from a regional accrediting association and guidelines for

extended campus library services. This resulted in the Glasgow Mary Wood Weldon Memorial Public Library cooperating in a pilot program to provide campus-quality library services to the students of the WKU extended campus program in Glasgow. Services included a toll free (800) number for access to main campus collections and reference service, courier services for materials from the WKU main campus, and FAX equipment in the Glasgow Public Library for students to receive free copies of articles sent from the WKU main campus library.

WKU's educational program in Glasgow really came into the spotlight in late November of 1987. Dr. Steve House, Executive Assistant to Western Kentucky University President Kern Alexander, made a speech before delighted Glasgow civic and business leaders that made headlines all across Kentucky. Dr. House announced that WKU was planning to establish a campus in Glasgow in time for the opening of the 1988 spring semester. House's announcement stated that WKU was committed to providing the city of Glasgow and surrounding communities with programs which would allow students to complete associate, baccalaureate, and master's degree programs on the Glasgow campus. The permanent campus was to include classrooms, administrative offices and library services.

The announcement immediately sparked controversy throughout the state. Headlines proclaimed: "Western Bringing Four Year College to Glasgow." "The Best News in Years." "Western Moves to Glasgow - just what the State doesn't need." "Stop Kublai Kern" (Alexander). The Louisville Courier Journal said: "Hardly anything in the field of Kentucky public higher education could be more ludicrous

than Western Kentucky University's unilateral move to establish a new campus at Glasgow. It flies in the face of all that has been achieved over decades to establish coordination and eliminate empire building." The Frankfort State Journal described the "brash proposal by Dr. Kern Alexander to create a branch of Western Kentucky University at Glasgow as a potential bomb that could destroy the advances made in the past 20 years in the university system and stall further improvement."

However, the WKU Board of Regents supported Alexander's Glasgow vision. Board chairman Joe Iracane said, "If our goal is to educate, then we ought to be tickled to death with what we've done in Glasgow." The Kentucky Council on Higher Education approved the expansion program at Glasgow. And Western Kentucky University at Glasgow began classes in January 1988 at the vacant Liberty Street School, which was leased to Western for $1.00 a month. Over 1000 students were expected to register for classes, and WKU's President had been named an honorary citizen of Glasgow.

With all the excitement about the new "Library Street Campus," librarians at WKU were following every word about the education expansion at Glasgow. One Courier Journal writer dubbed the WKU President "Alex in Wonderland," due to his determination to offer degree programs in Glasgow. The writer quoted the chairman of the Council on Higher Education as wondering "whether a student never exposed to a proper college library would get a quality education. It costs a small fortune to equip a library and big annual funding to maintain it. Money for a suitable college library in Glasgow could only come from the hides of existing schools." An editorial

in the Lexington Herald Leader suggested that "an institution without a real library building hardly needs to expand to another town" (this one puzzled the librarians but they imagined the writer was referring to the Helm Library building on the WKU campus which was originally a gymnasium affectionately known as the "Big Red Barn").

Planning progressed beyond the cooperative program then in place with the Mary Wood Weldon Public Library to a plan providing library services from a branch campus library to be housed in the University's campus building in Glasgow. A collection was envisioned supporting the Glasgow undergraduate curriculum with support from the main library collections in Bowling Green via present technological and traditional means in a library managed by the Glasgow Campus Librarian. The initial costs foreseen for personnel, facilities, equipment, and resources were $187,000, with continuing costs at $176,000.

Meanwhile Western Kentucky University at Glasgow celebrated a Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting in February, 1988. The opening culminated in "Glasgow Campus Week" which included a number of special activities and receptions. Bed banners appeared up and down Glasgow streets showing the WKU logo and "Welcome Home, Western." A large crowd gathered in the old Liberty Street School gym for the special ceremony, and General Russell E. Dougherty, former Commander-in-Chief of the Strategic Air Command a Glasgow native and Western alum, spoke stirringly about the new educational opportunities now available in Glasgow. "WKU is making college an expectation rather than an exception," Dougherty said, lighting a flame of

enthusiasm that spread like wildfire through the crowd. Red and white balloons dotted the sky, WKU red towels were draped on every chair and the WKU mascot, Big Red, the Western Cheerleaders and band added to the festive spirit on that frosty Sunday afternoon.

The most exciting moment for those University Libraries faculty and staff who were in attendance came when Golda Walbert of the Glasgow Business and Professional Women's Club rose from the audience to speak. Miss Walbert announced that the Glasgow BPW club was spearheading a fund drive to raise $100,000 to be used for library resources at the WKU Glasgow Campus with September 1988 as the target date to meet their goal.

Members of the Glasgow Club asked themselves "What can we do?" to assist the Western move to Glasgow. Their answer: raise enough money to establish a library for the Glasgow campus. "How much must we raise?" The answer was $100,000. "Can we do it?" they asked and answered, "Yes, we can." Their effort was to become a year-long project, but project co-chairs Golda Walbert and Ledean Hamilton led the way from the start of the fund drive in March 1988, to its remarkably successful conclusion in February 1989. Their project would win well-deserved awards for the Glasgow BPW club for public relations and for their outstanding volunteer effort.

During the year of the fund raising drive, the club used a number of different "angles" to raise the $100,000. The organization made an initial contribution of $5,000 toward the drive, and through the steering committee's efforts, literally no

part of the Glasgow community or those in the surrounding counties was untouched by the group's drive to secure the funds. Industry, business, schools, clubs and organizations were all contacted and urged to contribute to the fund project. Other activities included: Bean Soup Day, a bingo party, a Valentine Charity Ball, school club donations, raffles, memorials and honorariums.

A sign, the WKU Bookworm, was placed on the lawn of the public square in Glasgow during the entire project to show monetary progress. The sign was about ten feet tall and was located on the busiest corner of Glasgow.

The total raised by the Glasgow BPW club exceeded $104,000 which represented community commitment from many sources. Two companies gave $10,000 each while five companies or groups gave $5,000 each. Other major gifts included $3,000 from one organization, $1,000 from another, 15 donors contributed $1,000 each, and 16 groups gave $500 each to the effort. Over seven thousand dollars was contributed on the first day of the campaign and more than $7,100 was contributed on the day the goal was reached.

A special "topping out" celebration was held on the Glasgow square during a snowstorm to announce the achievement of the BPW's major $100,000 goal. WKU President Tom Meredith stated that the fund raising effort was one of the most ambitious ever directed toward Western library support from private sources. "It will serve as a testimony to the value placed on higher education in the Glasgow community." The Glasgow newspaper noted "few people in Glasgow doubted that the Glasgow BPW would accomplish their task. Over the years the BPW has proven

that it is much more than a 'meet and eat' organization.'"

Immediately following the announcement of the successful BPW drive University Libraries Director, Dr. Michael Binder, appointed a Committee on an Opening Day Collection for the Glasgow Campus Library. During 1989, the Director continued to push for progress toward the development of a Glasgow Campus Library, and in August he appointed the Glasgow Campus Library Planning Committee. A detailed plan was prepared for the development of the library collection, facility and services. The Library was actually becoming a reality!

From August 1989 to opening day in August 1990, was a year full of planning, budgeting, and learning. When the Planning Committee first began its work, they realized that not one of the "group of six" had ever planned the opening of a library before, an opportunity granted to few academic librarians. But, they were certainly ready to tackle the job and their enthusiasm was monumental. They had been thinking about this for some time!

The committee was armed with a "plan of action," a blueprint for the implementation of a wide range of library services at the Glasgow campus. Personnel was to be one professional librarian and four student assistants. "Resources" in the first year were to be financed from the over-$100,000 raised by the Glasgow community with the expectation that interest from funds remaining were to help cover acquisitions and subscription costs in future years. WKU Libraries anticipate that about a third of the cost of maintaining the resources at the Glasgow site will be borne by the endowment. Facilities and equipment costs for the operation were to

be funded by the University.

One interesting "hurdle" was the load bearing capability of the location to be used as the Glasgow Campus Library. In late 1988 an architect's study on the floor of the room was requested and the "live load capacity" was found not to meet Kentucky code specifications for a library. The report noted that "we should not load the room with books at this time."

Over the next year there were conversations with members of the firm who had built an addition to the original building. They presented suggestions that the "proper" placement of book shelves at certain angles should make the flooring acceptable. That brought rebuttals by the WKU Director of University Libraries who was determined that the floor of the room be brought up to specifications and also brought concerns by those responsible for finding ways to pay for the rather expensive project. A victorious compromise was engineered by the Director of the Glasgow Campus whereby a supportive local contractor completed the required construction in April 1990, at a very reasonable cost, making part of the cost a gift to the University. The community continued its "support" for the Glasgow Campus Library.

So by mid 1990, the facility was prepared, the equipment purchased, and the Glasgow Campus Librarian hired. Not a traditional branch library, the Glasgow Campus Library is best described as an "electronic library" with reference assistance using ERIC on CD-ROM and the Magazine Index Collection. The toll-free number for Extended Campus Library Services continues to be available with preliminary

reference assistance from the Glasgow Librarian. The FAX machine originally located in the Public Library was moved to the Glasgow Campus Library for receipt of photocopied materials for Glasgow extended campus students. Periodical indexes and abstracts previously housed at the Public Library were moved to the Glasgow Campus Library. Twice weekly courier service between the main campus library and the Glasgow campus continues, with drop-off and pick-up situated in the Glasgow Campus Library.

Additional library services available at the Glasgow Campus Library include bibliographic instruction provided by the Glasgow Campus Librarian to any classes taught on the Glasgow Campus; faculty reserve materials for Glasgow Campus classes may be made available at the Library; inter-library loan requests for Glasgow Campus students are reviewed by the librarian and forwarded to the WKU Libraries Interlibrary Loan Office; document delivery continues to be provided to Glasgow students and faculty by mail from the main campus library. The Glasgow Campus Library is open to citizens of the Glasgow area as well as to WKU students.

In August 1990, service began at the Glasgow Campus Library. During the first two weeks of operation 385 instances of individual assistance were recorded and the library was literally full of students during all the scheduled hours. The grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony in September 1990 marked the official opening of the new library at Western's extended campus at Glasgow. WKU President Tom Meredith presided at the ribbon cutting and attended the reception following. There were tours of the facility, demonstrations, and refreshments. A large crowd,

including the WKU President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, members of the WKU Board of Regents and Deans' Council, WKU faculty and students, and the WKU mascot, Big Red, attended. The festivity was covered well by the area television station and newspapers form Bowling Green and Glasgow.

Of course, the real work had just begun. Service, schedule, request and delivery services, and library instruction will have to be refined. But as Dr. Jim Heck, Director of the WKU Glasgow Campus, put it, "the WKU Glasgow Library opening was a very important event for the campus symbolizing a significant step forward in our ability to provide quality higher educational opportunities to the citizens of south central Kentucky." Glasgow area support had assured the opening of a state-of-the-art library which serves as a model for future library services to Western Kentucky University extended campus centers.

As one recent newspaper headline stated: "Glasgow Campus Flourishes Proving Critics Wrong" and another: "Success of WKU at Glasgow Silences Critics." The decision three years ago that brought WKU to Glasgow looks like a good one. The number of classes has increased many times over. Enrollment has soared, with more than half of Glasgow's students coming from the rural area east of Glasgow.

One of the editorial writers during the earlier period of the WKU expansion to Glasgow argued that "Kentuckians have enough access to higher education. The problem is the quality of the education provided." The WKU Glasgow Campus and the Glasgow Campus Library have proved that our extended campus students in Glasgow have both, access and quality.

Open Forum
White House Conference
on
Library & Information Services

July 12, 1991

Testimony of:

John D. Hales, Jr.
Suwannee River Regional Library
Live Oak, Florida

Sixty-four percent of public libraries serve towns or communities with population less than 10,000 according to the National Center for Educational Statistics. Probably about eighty percent serve 25,000 or less.

Over one-fourth of the U.S. population is considered to be living in rural areas, 64,798,000 according to U. S. Census. Their description of rural is, "open countryside

as well as places with fewer than 2,500 inhabitants that are **not** in the suburbs of large cities."

The majority of these residents **do not have** what is commonly called "basic library services." Even at that they are confronting a library crisis. Citizens are having to choose between closing a library or a firehouse, between laying off library staff or a policeman, or demobilizing a bookmobile or a garbage truck. This financial crunch is happening to cities, as well.

Often, however, the rural library, if it even exists, is the single source, next to the extension agent, of information and culture in many of America's small communities. Rural areas do not have Boys Clubs, children's museums, YMCA's, community colleges, United Way, Continuing education or lifelong learning centers. The rural public library is the true people's university in small town America.

A picture of small town American libraries would show that few have any technology beyond telephones and typewriters (some are even electric), and that most are in buildings not designed for libraries but occupy handed down post offices, railroad stations, storefronts, etc. Very few have computers, CD-ROM readers, or even microfiche readers and copy machines.

By far the vast majority of these libraries are staffed by individuals who hold no MLS, or even a college degree. Yes, the staff often are well suited to the rural environment, having "grown up" there, but they often fall victim to the prejudices and racism of that generally white upbringing. These persons who probably staff as many as 5,000 of our Nation's libraries (there are 520 libraries in Iowa serving populations

of 10,000 or less) will never attend college or a library science course. Most have never spent a night away from their spouse since they were married. They do deserve, though, enlightenment about library philosophy, programs and management techniques. They need training which outside of a very few states doesn't exist.

Rural American children, according to the "National Study Regarding At-Risk Students," are almost twice as likely to become involved in drugs. They also are more sexually active, more prone to depression, and more likely to be involved in crime than their urban and suburban counterparts, the report reveals. There is a tremendous need for better public libraries and information to rural America for these and other reasons.

The best law libraries in the six rural counties that I work in North Florida are available to only five percent of the total population. Why is that? Because you must be sentenced to a state prison to access those five law libraries in local state institutions, which have been mandated for convicted criminals, but not for the general public.

This conference will be discussing access. The geographic access issue is as real as the needed access for the handicapped, minorities and other underserved groups. Rural children or adults cannot take the bus or metro to the library as can someone in Brooklyn, Watts, or Alexandria. Generally the county library, if it exists, is located in a county seat. Counties, of course, stretch for twenty-thirty or more miles in either direction. It certainly isn't feasible to put contemporary libraries in each town, or four roads crossing to serve the dispersed rural population.

Networking and access currently provide another example of rural libraries' plight. The Suwannee River Regional Library has no local node to access a service, such as Compu-Serve, over its 4,200 square-mile service area. We must pay for long distance charges, as well as Solinet charges, when we want to use the ILL network. Even if we could afford some on-line services such as Dialog, or even the flat monthly charge of Prodigy, the long distance charges to access these services would still be prohibitive under our current financial position.

Administrative and governmental organizational structures in small towns do not have professional grant writers with word processors, etc., to efficiently pursue Federal or private grant funds. We often don't know how to play the "Washington" or state capitol games. Also, most Federal and State funding authorities are centered in cities, and sometimes, but not always, don't know or have forgotten what rural America really is.

In town after town in rural America, professional principals and superintendents, and professional teachers decide what students in classrooms will study. The young students, then, go to the rural public library and are assisted by a high school graduate who got the job because they "love to read." One of the most important parts of the education process is not being facilitated by trained people in those libraries.

Rural citizens are sensitive to urban crisis, but there is a rural crisis, too. We are sensitive to minority, disadvantaged and handicapped needs, too. We are, too, those persons, although more sparsely spread out. We are the Black, the Hispanic,

the Native American, the migrant laborer, the small business person and the illiterate.

Most of us support the emphasis to establish networks that currently mostly only our city brother and sister can "practically" access. We think the leadership of NCLIS, WHCLIS and ALA is steering in the right direction.

In September, 1990, over 230 rural library workers from 27 states met in Omaha to discuss a rural library agenda for the future, thanks to the H. W. Wilson Foundation and the Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship at Clarion University.

The resulting agenda supported educational opportunities for all library workers, the establishment of a network connecting small, rural and urban libraries with **affordable** costs, that funding be provided to rural libraries to insure "as close as possible" equality of access, and that a title be created in LSCA for the development of rural libraries, as was originally intended in the initial Act; and lastly that rural libraries must become vocal at all levels and be involved in community activities as leaders in their communities.

Please remember the small one or two-person library serving that child, that senior citizen, that small business person and that non-reader. We are one of every four Americans and urge you to remember us in your recommendations and plans.

Survey of Continuing Education Opportunities for Rural Librarians

Mlou Williams
Hermiston, Oregon

What educational opportunities are being made to rural librarians? Rural libraries, for the most part, have been forgotten in past years, excluded from active consideration, but now their time has come (Vavrek 87-88). The advancement of technology now allows the small and rural library to keep its coziness while at the same time, provided the most updated services. Especially in the past 10 years, the concept of the rural library has been more in evidence, in some cases meaning serving 2500 or less people, in others, serving 25,000 or less people.

There have been many surveys done on this now contemporary topic -- small or rural libraries. They all have one chapter alike in their stories -- the one that states there are not enough professional librarians staffing small libraries. The reasons, like the statistics, are myriad. But here, I will just deal with statistics.

An exploratory survey of 80 Pennsylvania libraries serving a population under 25,000, conducted in 1979, dealt with rural libraries and information needs. It noted

that many rural librarians do not have formal education as librarians (Head, Professional Isolation 23).

Another survey noted that Kansas has 1,300 persons employed in 315 libraries and only 135, or just over 10 percent, have the MLS as of 1988 (Starke 40). In Iowa's 520 libraries with a total of 600 library employees, slightly less than 20 percent have the MLS (Stanke 79). A national survey in 1984 of 1,100 libraries serving a population of under 25,000 showed that half the libraries had no staff member with the MLS (Head, Reference Survey 316).

Another nationwide survey published in 1988 noted that 63 percent of public librarians have the MLS (Greiner, Nonprofessionals 79). That means 37 percent are considered to be nonprofessionals, or without formal training and accreditation in library science. It is likely that the 37 percent could be made up of any kind of librarian or staff person, from a highly educated, enthusiastic and experienced person, to a staid stereotypical librarian who wants to sit in the quiet, orderly library and not be bothered by patrons, or from a small-town library advocate willing to learn and do all that's possible, to a warm body who knows the alphabet and can cipher.

The National Center for Education Statistics notes that in 44 states there are 6,105 libraries serving up to 25,000 population, and only about 20 percent of those libraries, or 1,172, have any staff members with an MLS degree from a school accredited by the American Library Association (U.S. Dept. of Ed. 6).

Now, there has been a longstanding debate regarding the need for the MLS. General knowledge, specialized education in another field, and work experience all

are assets to the library worker. But these do not replace the study of cataloging and collection development, training with reference tools and learning to use them efficiently, philosophy of librarianship, techniques of database searching or the rich history of literature. For these, experts are needed in each field who are trained to effectively share their knowledge; and a good example of that kind of person is a professor.

There are many librarians who want to be able to provide the standard services their patrons seek and deserve, and who are willing to dip their toes into the new levels of service, programs, and technology that will expand their community's information resources, as well as their patron's horizons.

Libraries are in a struggle for survival. The competitive financial and political environment demands more of today's librarian, especially in small- and medium-sized libraries, and especially when there is no regional setup to provide support and expertise in these arenas. On the other hand, even in a regional setting, the person behind the desk or in the stacks of a small or rural library is the person who has the most impact on that library's patrons. That staff member must be taught at least a modicum of librarianship for the sake of those patrons. "Individuals whose loyalties stop at their library door, who believe libraries mean checking out books, are underestimating their patrons and limiting their communities" (Mech, 235).

Demographic trends show that rural areas are gaining in population. The pastoral setting may be a welcome relief from the crime-ridden metropolis, but that simplified lifestyle may also be the cause of culture shock from lack of social activities

and information resources (Head, Reference Survey 320).

As more and more people move to rural and suburban areas, many of them bring with them more education, as well as more sophisticated information needs which likely were met in the larger libraries and are now being demanded of the smaller libraries. In addition, with the rapid advancement in technology and information sources, the demand is increasing especially in the small libraries for more educated, enlightened librarians. What is being done to help the staff in small and rural libraries meet the challenge to ensure these needs are met?

It is clear that nonprofessionals constitute the major portion of the library staff in rural libraries, but what is being done to help them toward professionalism is not clear. For that reason a survey was conducted on a nationwide random sample that showed that continuing education activities are encouraged and sometimes even required (Greiner, Nonprofessionals 78).

In 1981 in North Dakota, a statewide survey was conducted of public librarians regarding continuing education interests and programming preferences. At that time, 50 percent of the staff (including 40 percent of supervisors) had less than a college education; only 13 percent had any formal training in librarianship (Homes 37-38). But the goal is to have motivated employees who want to offer the best in library service and to help the library organization develop towards that end (Greiner, Nonprofessional 10-11).

In a study completed in 1983 by the Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship, dealing in part with education in rural libraries, Dr. John W. Head

noted that 25 of the 42 state library agencies responded that they had a plan or program for (or including) rural library education (Head, State Library Agencies 7-8). Head also asked if there were agencies other than state libraries and library schools that provide training for rural librarians. The response was 19 affirmatives out of the 42 total (Head, SLA, 9-10). "The need to upgrade rural librarians' education seems clear both from the previous studies and from the conventional wisdom of the profession" (Head, SLA, 14).

His conclusion was that no one agency or group of people has both the clear responsibility and the required resources to move rural libraries on the problem of lack of adequate training ... but it's comforting to know some state agencies are working vigorously and intelligently on these concerns (Head, SLA 15-16). Stanke agrees. "State library agencies, state library associations and regional library systems are the primary providers of training for the non-degreed librarians" (Stanke, Non-degreed, 79).

Is the above true? What are state libraries or their counterparts doing to meet the educational needs of paraprofessional librarians in rural libraries? Also are they offering what the librarians want and need?

Stanke also writes that "... survey after survey reveals that library directors without a master's degree, generally in geographically remote areas and in communities of under 25,000 population, prefer workshop-type programs at a district level that offer 'useful' information, i.e., relevant to their situation" (Stanke, Training 80).

So I arrive at the purpose of this survey -- to determine what educational opportunities are being made available to rural librarians and rural library staff.

This survey of state library agencies was conducted in March, 1990 from the Center for Rural Librarianship at Clarion University of Pennsylvania. For this survey, a rural library was defined as one serving a population of under 25,000 people. A total of 51 4-page surveys with cover letters were sent out March 1, 1990, one to each state agency and one to Washington, D.C., to be directed to the person responsible for, or most familiar with, continuing education opportunities in his or her state. There were 40 completed surveys returned, for a 78 percent return rate. In addition, other information, catalogs and printed materials were also sent along to expound the special efforts some states are making to encourage rural participation in the continuing education process.

The 11 questions were specifically geared toward a response regarding libraries serving a population of under 25,000. Respondents were directed to check the blanks on items listed, but they were also encouraged to add any information or comments they wished.

Questions one and two asked for general information regarding continuing education opportunities for rural staff members. Question one had three parts. The first part asked, "Is rural library education a funded activity in your state library budget?" The response was 27 yes and 12 no. While some respondents noted the term "rural" was not in a budget line item, their state was primarily rural so the continuing education budget was "defacto" rural education. One state is beginning

such a line item in the 1990-91 fiscal year. The second part of Question One asked if the state's library association assumes any responsibility for rural library education programs. The response was 23 yes and 15 no. The third part of Question One asked if there is a cooperative venture between the state library agency and the state library association in providing for continuing education. It was heartening to see a spirit of cooperation in so many states: 30 said yes, nine said no.

Question Two asked if respondents were aware of other sponsors of library workshops targeting rural library staff. Of the six listed, they were asked to check any or all that applied. The top response was that in 20 states, regional library systems (including county libraries) provide CE; in 14, higher education provides and in 13, professional library associations provide. Some local libraries provide workshops in eight states, local schools in three states, and business and industry were marked by none.

Question Three asked, "Are there other means that you use to provide educational opportunities for rural librarians?" The responses showed that 36 states use traveling consultants to provide educational opportunities. Next highest was free telephone access, either by 800 number, electronic mail or accepting collect calls, in 32 states. There are newsletters in 28 states. Other means of providing educational opportunities that respondents wrote in included: publications issued on an irregular basis; manuals, handbooks, and AV materials; teleconference events; and LSCA grants to attend state and national conferences.

Question Four asked about workshop topics covered in the past year, whether

the workshops were presented in rural settings and if rural attendance met expectations. Very few respondents noted attendance did not meet expectations, but it is ponderable whether the workshops were always wonderfully received or if memories might be somewhat fallible. This was not a fair question to ask.

The workshop topics were listed in logical grouping, to include, for example, automation with CD-ROM, electronic mail, microcomputers, online searching, fax, modem, and so on. A list will be given below.

Of the 499 workshops given in 39 states in the past year, 351, or 70 percent, were held at rural sites, and 395, or 79 percent, met rural attendance expectations.

The subject covered most often in workshops was automation, presented in 27 states in the past year. Of those 27 workshops, 16 were held in rural sites, and 19 of the 27 workshops met rural attendance expectations while two did not. This preponderance of automation workshops reveals that technology is advancing in the rural areas, and state libraries are meeting the need of training users in those rural libraries.

It is even more heartening to see the topic of the second most predominant workshop, board and council relations, held in 24 states. I believe this is evidence of the growing attitude that strength in public relations, politics and assertiveness is being recognized as necessary commodities in rural libraries to stabilize financial aid and increase community support.

In addition to those listed on the survey, respondents wrote in workshop topics that have been presented in the past year. The most predominant was long-range

planning (in 5 states), in 2 states, service to special groups, and in 1 state each: statistical reporting, output measures, intellectual freedom and information referral. Other workshop topics included in the survey and the number of states in which they have been presented are listed on the next page:

Collection Development	23
Reference	22
Youth Programs	22
Literacy	21
Microcomputers	19
Inter-library loan	18
Weeding	18
Cataloging, Classifying	17
Grant Writing	17
Management	17
Adult Programs	16
Goal Setting	16
CD-ROM	15
Materials Selection	15
Basic Librarianship	13

Budgeting	13
Fund Raising	13
Personnel Issues	13
Policies, Procedures	13
Book Repair/Preservation	12
Fax, Modem, Etc.	12
Electronic Mail	10
Publicity, Promotion	10
Resource Sharing	9
Developing Volunteers	8
Online Searching	8
Book Talks	7
Building Programs	7
Networking	7
Acquisitions	6
Stress	6
Newsletters	5
Union Catalog	5
Topics Not Included	7

In Question Five, respondents were asked to check all the kinds of workshops offered in their states; 11 varieties were listed. The one-day workshop held on-site

in areas around the state was predominant, according to 34 respondents. Next highest offered was also a one-day workshop, held in 30 states, but this one-day workshop includes travel time both ways to the workshop site, which is not necessarily in a rural area. Third most popular, with 18 affirmative responses, was again a one-day workshop, including an overnight stay either before or after the workshop. Next popular, at 17, was the two-three day workshop. Eight states offer a concentrated, college live-in setting where the event lasts a week or less.

After that, the numbers declined considerably: weekend workshop (5); workshop longer than three days (5); concentrated college live-in setting lasting more than one week (5); satellite workshops (3); annual regional retreats other than the state conference (2); and correspondence course workshops (2).

Other workshop offerings written in by respondents were half-day, a series of workshops, audio-link to classrooms around the state, and, in Hawaii, an annual Library Institute Day held simultaneously on Hawaii's four major islands.

Questions Six through Nine dealt with funding, and the respondents were asked to check all answers that applied to their states. Question Six asked if the workshops are meant to be profit-making, break even financially, be funded by those attending, or be funded by other means.

This question was poorly organized. The majority of the answers wound up in the "other means" column. None said workshops were to be profit-making; 13 said they should break even; and 12 said they were funded by those attending the workshop. But 33 offered other options for funding, with major sources being state

funds and Library Services Construction Act (LSCA) funds. This is a plus for showing how many states rely in part on LSCA funds to provide necessary education for librarians. State funds are used in 22 states, LSCA funds in 21 states, library association funds in three states, and state or regional funds in two states. One state replied the workshops are free if presented by the state library staff. Oregon noted that some workshops are jointly funded by attendees and their Rural/Small Library Program. The Basic Librarianship Institute, which is a week-long college campus setting, is open by application and takes donations to help defray expenses, most of which are paid by the state library.

Question Seven asked who is recruited to present workshops. The greatest number of states (34) use state library staff members as speakers. But 28 states also call on staff members from other libraries; 25 also use volunteers and reimburse their expenses; paid professional speakers are used in 24 states, and volunteers speak and pay their own expenses in six states. Another option, again from Oregon, is finding speakers who work at another state library or are on the faculty of a library school. Their expenses are paid and small honoraria offered.

In Question Eight, when asked if the state library usually provides funds for attendees' workshop expenses, 16 said no. In 12 states, registration is paid; six pay travel to and from workshops; seven pay both travel and registration; and three provide funds to be distributed by regional or county libraries.

Nine respondents cited other funding alternatives:

1. Provide funds for out-of-state conferences only.

2. We provide room, board, and conference costs, while participants pay tuition and travel costs.
3. Regional systems and the library association together provide CE grants, and housing is provided free for non-MLS staff attending a college live-in workshop.
4. Room and board are provided free for our two-week institute.
5. Workshops are free, and local libraries provide travel funds.
6. Workshops are free, but participants pay own travel costs (two responded this way).
7. Costs are split: state library pays housing and speaker, and attendees pay meals and travel.
8. Funds go to regional libraries which may or may not use them for covering workshop costs.
9. No fees of any kind are charged (two responded this way).

Question Nine asked respondents to tell how it is decided to whom funds will be provided. In 18 states, it is by application. It is on a one-time-per-person basis in one state. None of the agencies base funding on the library's size or budget size. There were 14 "other" answers written in as follows:

1. No funds provided.
2. Workshop content is reviewed by committee for consideration of LSCA funding.
3. As part of eligible state aid expenditures.

4. All applicants are treated the same and receive some funding opportunities.
5. We pay costs directly.
6. Funding is made available to all public libraries.
7. Funds are used to pay speakers; no food or lodging for participants.
8. For workshops not funded directly by LSCA, there are LSCA grants available to individual applicants through the Council on Continuing Education.
9. Funding is based on the length of and demands of a workshop.
10. Workshops are free to all who register.
11. Each library system receives CE funds through LSCA.
12. Funds are given based on distance traveled to workshop site.
13. Funds are open to all who apply.
14. Regional staff presents plans for CE which are funded directly by the state agency.

Questions Eight and Nine were confusing and needed to be made more specific, dealing separately with each basic concept of funding workshops and financial aid to attendees.

Question Ten was my favorite. It asked respondees to list the reasons they have been given or have heard why librarians or staff cannot or do not attend workshops. Respondees were asked to check all the reasons they have heard and circle the one heard most often.

The high score, 31, went to "no one to keep the library open." This is ironic,

in light of responses to Question Eight which shows that not one state agency provides a replacement to keep rural libraries open so staff can attend workshops. it is curious to suppose if the reasons for not attending would change, or if workshop attendance would go up if replacements were made available for rural libraries. This is truly a frustrating problem in a library with only one person on staff. Five respondents circled this as the reason they heard more than any other.

A close second to "no one to keep the library open," however, is "too far to travel," listed by 30 respondents, and ten circled this as the reason heard most often.

It was surprising to find in third place, from 18 states, "no support from library board to attend." Perhaps the high number of workshops given this past year dealing with library boards and other governing bodies (Question Four) will change this statistic in the near future.

Other reasons given, in numerical order, are: too expensive (12); topic not of interest (nine); interferes with family life (nine); topic over my head (eight); don't want to attend alone (six); and not interested in more education (two).

Other reasons that were not included in the questionnaire, but were cited by respondents, are: there's not enough time; the workshops are too long; I can't drive in the big city; we're too small and the workshop (any topic) doesn't pertain to use; and, my husband doesn't like me to travel out of town.

Not everyone hears excuses for not attending workshops. In Utah, the state requires completion of a four-year UPLIFT program by library staff for the library to receive state aid. (UPLIFT is an acronym for Utah Public Library Institute for

Training, and the symbol is a hot-air balloon!) Given this requirement, and since the state pays all expenses, they hear few excuses about not attending workshops. Occasionally personal problems will require someone to skip a year, but most love to attend.

In Alaska, due to geographic distances and cultural differences, they have the most problems getting small village aides to take training. There is also a very high turnover rate among their library aides, so it is a constant problem.

Question 11 dealt with kinds of recognition given for workshop attendance. Certificates of participation top the list in 16 states. Others were: press release to local media (11); credit towards certification (10); college credits (7); letter to attendee's supervisor (4); letter to attendee's governing body (3); and none of the above (9). One state provides graduate credits. Several states have special programs to assure meeting established requirements for accreditation or certification.

At the end of Question 11, which is the end of the survey, at which point respondents were encouraged to make any additional comments they wished, 19 of the 39 did. They are listed below:

The state library's certification program is highly regarded by the library community of Iowa. One factor in the accreditation of public libraries (another state library program) is a trained, certified staff. A state library committee screens plans for workshops and awards continuing education credits for those who attend. A state library database management program tracks the credits earned by each individual

and certification and status of renewal. An annual status report is sent from the state library to each individual.

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"We encourage participants to share workshop information with colleagues. Minimal staff support does not permit other forms of recognition."

****

"Although continuing education programs are available to libraries serving under 25,000 people, they are the same programs available to those serving over 25,000 people. South Carolina only has five libraries serving a population of less than 25,000 people."

****

"We are presently planning a Basic Skills Institute, but do not have certainty of funding for the next biennium yet. We have recently initiated a "workshops upon request" program which is available to rural libraries as well as urban (we'll do a workshop for as few as 8-10 participants.)"

****

"It should be noted that fully 77 percent of Massachusetts libraries serve communities of less than 25,000, but only about half of those are situated in rural areas. Most of our towns are satellite communities to three major cities: Boston, Springfield, and Worcester, and serve a relatively sophisticated clientele. For planning purposes the state agency considers libraries serving populations under

15,000 to be small. A strong regional library consultant program is in place throughout the state with frequent contacts to member libraries."

****

"Because almost 100 percent of Idaho libraries are classified as rural, about all CE programs are targeted to this level. However, very few, if any, deal with 'rural 'rural' problems."

****

"There are only two counties out of 23 that meet the description of a rural library. Maryland is a small state and while there are rural areas, each library system participates in state, area and local activities. The "rural"-ness is not separated nor distinguished from any other activities in Maryland at this point.

****

"In Colorado, the cooperative CE arrangement is that, on the whole, the seven regional library service systems provide CE at their weekend retreats on basic, specific library topics taught best to smaller groups. The state library provides workshops on broader topics to reach more people and/or longer CE activities like the week-long Small Library Institute last August. Then we pay travel expenses if held in Denver only."

****

"The Nebraska Library Commission runs a voluntary certification program for public librarians. All librarians must, if wishing to be certified, complete basic skills courses in four subject areas: Public Library Administration; Organization of

Materials; Public Services and Collection Development/Selection. In addition, to be re-certified, they must have 45 hours of continuing education in a three-year period. The six regional library systems, autonomous but funded through the library commission, are responsible for the delivery of the basic skills classes as well as practical type workshops such as weeding, etc. The Library Commission will (or tries to) only offer workshops that these library systems could not offer because of cost or lack of expertise, or of a statewide nature. A great deal of our training deals with NEBASE, our statewide OCLC network and other NE information network components."

****

"The Vermont Department of Libraries provides over 50 workshops each year in numerous locations throughout the state. The state assumes all financial responsibility for presenting the workshops. Local libraries must assume mileage expenses for their own staff. All workshops are filled to capacity."

****

"Since one-third of the public library systems in Louisiana serve populations under 25,000, we design all continuing education events so they will have relevance for rural libraries."

****

"Workshops planned and presented by Bureau of Development Services (BODS) staff at local (area) meetings are generally the most effective (and free!) way of reaching librarians. These are conducted on a monthly basis in some part of the

state.

The University Systems School for Lifelong Learning is an off-campus-located organization, specifically aimed at the non-traditional student. Through LSS, we are able to offer the Library Techniques Program Courses in at least five locations per semester, and at times that are more available for the libraries in a particular area. Courses are presently two credits each, to become (next fall) three credits. Certification of Librarians requires a minimum of 8 courses, or an MLS degree."

****

"In Washington State, three one-day workshops are provided each year specifically targeted for the non-degreed person in a library serving populations of under 5,000. Each workshop is given in six different locations. They also provide a three-day workshop each year, one for trustees and friends in even-numbered years and one on automation in odd-numbered years. There is also a newsletter aimed at the "one-person library" as well as occasional "fact sheets" on subjects of immediate concern."

****

"In Oregon, the state library's objective is to present 12 workshops during each legislative biennium, marketed under the acronym SLICE -- Small Libraries Continuing Education series. They are directed at library directors, board members and other staff in Oregon's rural or small libraries, and repeated in two to five locations around the state. Most of the workshops are free or have a small registration fee to cover materials costs. In addition, a statewide telecommunications

network is in development and expected to provide an alternative for delivering educational opportunities to Oregon library staff members."

****

"In Utah, the (Utah Public Library Institute for Training), UPLIFT, was established in 1986 and provides basic skills in library management to librarians from small rural communities. In 1989, 23 librarians were honored for attending over the past four years and fulfilling a major upgrade requirement. There are 34 slated to finish their four-year training program this year. While the focus may change as needs may change, the program will continue to symbolize continuing education and professional development in library service."

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CONCLUSION

In 1983, a survey showed that 25 of 42 responding state agencies were taking responsibility for providing educational opportunities to rural librarians, while in 19 of those states, other agencies were also participating. This year, the number is up, with 27 of 39 responding states providing educational opportunities, and other groups in 23 of those states as well.

It appears state libraries have increased their efforts to provide professional training to staff working in libraries that qualify as small or rural, but which in actuality are beginning to see a need for the same sophistication and technological expertise that large libraries have possessed in past years. The advancement in technology will allow the small or rural library to keep its coziness, while providing the best in reference and resources through networking, resource sharing and inter-library loans.

While the confusion still exists in defining the "small" or "rural" library, research should be done in the future to define such libraries based on other data, such as socio-economic, life-style or education standards.

Research needs also to be done to show how much is spent in LSCA funding to provide education for the librarians who are serving all ages in our society, in a society where demand on that librarian is increasing because literacy is decreasing.

Librarians, too, need to be the target of research -- perhaps on the actual out-of-pocket expenses librarians must spend for educating themselves to their job, and their feelings about the need for some tangible form of recognition. They could also

be queried as to how attaining the MLS could be made more feasible, since it appears this kind of education is still of great importance.

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APPENDIX

SURVEY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL LIBRARIANS
PLEASE ANSWER EVERY QUESTION USING THE REQUESTED MARKING.
ALSO, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO MAKE WHATEVER NOTES YOU WISH TO ADD.
RURAL APPLIES TO LIBRARIES SERVING UNDER 25,000 POPULATION.

Q-1. Please check the appropriate lines:

Yes	No	
—	—	Is rural library education a funded activity in your state library budget?
		If not, is such a program anticipated for funding in (how many) ____ years?
—	—	Does the state library ASSOCIATION assume any responsibility for rural library education programs?
—	—	Is there a cooperative venture between the state library agency and state library association in providing for continuing education?

Q-2. If you are aware of other sponsors of library workshops targeting rural library staff, please check each that applies:

— Regional library system

— Higher education provider

— Local library

— Professional library association

— Local school district

— Business or industry

— Other (please specify)_____

Q-3. Are there other means that you use to provide educational opportunities for rural librarians, such as: (please check all that apply)

__ Newsletter

__ Traveling consultant (for collection evaluation, on-site training, assistance with weeding, budgeting, etc.)

__ Free access to assistance by telephone (800 number, etc.)

__ Other (please elaborate): _____

Q-4. In front of the workshop topic, please check all topics covered in workshops given in your state in the past year. Then check if the workshop was presented in a rural setting, and if attendance by rural library staff met your expectations. Finally, please circle the topic you felt was most needed. Please give as much information as you can, but don't feel obligated to spend time researching matters.

TOPIC(S) COVERED AT WORKSHOP	WORKSHOP HELD AT RURAL SITE	RURAL ATTENDANCE MET EXPECTATIONS? YES	NO
__ Automation	__	__	__
__ CD ROM	__	__	__
__ Electronic mail	__	__	__
__ Microcomputers	__	__	__
__ Online searching	__	__	__
__ Other (fax, modem, etc.)	__	__	__
__ Adult programs	__	__	__
__ Booktalks	__	__	__
__ Literacy projects	__	__	__
__ Youth programs	__	__	__
__ Board, council relations	__	__	__
__ Developing friends	__	__	__
__ Developing volunteers	__	__	__
__ Newsletters	__	__	__
__ Publicity, promotion	__	__	__
__ Budgeting	__	__	__
__ Building programs	__	__	__
__ Fund raising	__	__	__
__ Grant writing	__	__	__

__ Acquisitions	__	__	__
__ Book repair/preservation	__	__	__
__ Catalog, classifying	__	__	__
__ Collection Development	__	__	__
__ Materials Selection	__	__	__
__ Weeding collection	__	__	__
__ Inter-library loan	__	__	__
__ Networking	__	__	__
__ Reference	__	__	__
__ Resource sharing	__	__	__
__ Service delivery	__	__	__
__ Union catalog	__	__	__
__ Basic librarianship	__	__	__
__ Goal setting	__	__	__
__ Management	__	__	__
__ Personnel issues	__	__	__
__ Policies, procedures	__	__	__
__ Stress	__	__	__

Q-5. Please check all the kinds of workshops you offer, and circle the one style you have found to be most successful in terms of encouraging attendance of rural library staff members.

__ One-day workshop held on-site in areas around the state
__ One-day workshop (including travel time both ways)
__ One-day workshop (with overnight stay either before or after
__ Two/three-day weekday workshop
__ Workshop longer than 3 days
__ Concentrated college life-in setting, one week or less
__ Concentrated college live-in setting, more than 1 week
__ Annual regional retreat other than state conference
__ Correspondence workshop
__ Satellite workshop - TV and classroom
__ Other workshop settings (please describe) _____

QUESTIONS 6-11, PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY. CIRCLE MOST PREDOMINANT.

Q-6. Are your workshops usually meant to:

__ Be profit-making ventures
__ Break even financially
__ Be funded by those attending the workshop
__ Be funded by other means (please describe) _____

Q-7. Are your workshop speakers most often:

__ Volunteers who pay their own expenses
__ Volunteers with expenses reimbursed
__ State library staff
__ Staff from other libraries
__ Paid professional speakers
__ Other (please explain) _____

Q-8. Does the State Library usually provide funds for:

__ Registration for workshops
__ Travel expenses to and from workshops
__ Both registration and travel costs
__ Replacement librarian to keep rural library open
__ Distribution by regional or county library
__ None of the above
__ Other (please explain) _____

Q-9. When funds are provided for CE workshops, are they available:

__ By application
__ On a one-time basis per person
__ Based on library size
__ Based on library budget
__ Other (please explain) _____

Q-10. Do you hear reasons from rural library staff members why they cannot or do not attend workshops? Please check all the reasons you hear and circle the one you hear most often.

__ Too far to travel
__ Too expensive
__ No one to keep the library open
__ No support from board to attend
__ Topic not of interest
__ Topic over my head

__ Don't want to attend alone
__ Not interested in more education
__ Interferes with family life
__ Other (please specify) _____

Q-11. Please check if you provide any of the below to recognize attendance at a workshop, and circle the means most often used.

__ Certificate of certification
__ Credit towards certification
__ College credit
__ Letter to attendee's supervisor
__ Letter to attendee's governing body
__ Press release to local media
__ None of the above
__ Other (please specify) _____

Please feel free to make any additional comments here:

ALL DATA WILL BE KEPT ANONYMOUS UNLESS WE HAVE PERMISSION FROM YOU. FOR PURPOSES OF COMMUNICATION, PLEASE PROVIDE THE INFORMATION REQUESTED BELOW:

Your Name_____ Title_____

State Represented_____ Work Phone ( )_____

Mailing address_____
Street City State Zip

What Small Town Public Libraries Mean to Their Communities: A Consultant's Perspective

by
Gardner Hanks
Continuing Education Consultant
Idaho State Library

Much as rural communities are widely divergent, small town public libraries also have their own unique characteristics. Not only may the quality of collections and services vary from community to community, but the meaning of the library to its community may also be very different from one town to another, and even from one group to another within a community.

As professionally-trained librarians, library consultants have the tendency to look at libraries solely in terms of library functions. They look at a library's collection, its staff, and the services it provides, and judge the library's value to its constituency in these terms alone. However, if they want to help the library to develop, they must first come to see the library as its community, its board, and its staff see it. The first question the consultant should ask, then, is not: "How good is this library?" It should be: "What does this library mean to this community?"

The Meanings of Small Town Libraries

The small town library may have a wide variety of meanings for people in its community. Some of these fit into the traditional "functional" purpose of providing informational, educational, recreational and cultural materials and services to the public. Other meanings have to do with small town society, and others may be as a

symbol of the community itself. It is not unusual for these "non-functional" purposes to be more important to the community than the functional.

The Functional Meaning. The function of the public library is to provide its community with books and other media to meet the community's informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs. No matter what other meanings the library may have, generally at least lip service will be given to this meaning for the library, and for some people in every community, the functional meaning of the library will be its most important meaning.

Within this meaning small town libraries tend to emphasize the recreational and educational functions. In many towns the library is seen as a place for women to get novels and schoolchildren to get resources for their studies. Reference services are usually provided at a very basic level, because higher levels would require the purchase of expensive materials and more highly trained personnel. Information services, then, tend to center around information for daily living. The emphasis placed on cultural materials will often depend on the library's history, and the other meanings the library may have for the community.

The School Library Substitute. In this meaning for the public library, one of its functions is overemphasized to the point of distortion. In hard pressed rural communities, enterprising school administrators and teachers sometimes seek to make the public library a substitute for school library services. Typically, this occurs when the library is close to the school. Administrators or teachers send students to the library on a regular basis, often monopolizing the library's daytime hours for this

purpose alone. They may also put pressure on the library to use its budget primarily for materials to support the school's curriculum. Such libraries are fairly easy to identify, as they will have very strong children's areas, will have a regular (often weekly) schedule of classes attending the library, and normally will have little adult use. The library board for this kind of library may be dominated by teachers or other school personnel.

The Women's Club Project. Many small town libraries were begun as a project for a women's literary club. If the library has continued to be the special province of its founding club, it takes on a meaning very different from its purported function. In this situation library functions become secondary to the power and purposes of the club. For example, the library boards may refuse to recommend anyone to serve as a board member who does not belong to the club. Since in many small towns, the library board tends to be self-perpetuating, this effectively eliminates non-members from having any meaningful input on library decision making. The board may also be reluctant to ask for funding from the city or county, as it sees that such funding may weaken the club's control over the library. Library staff may be hired because they are club members, not because they are the best qualified candidates for the job.

Because women's club type libraries by their nature restrict the kind of board members who serve, they frequently overemphasize materials and services that are of interest to the club's members. They may have comparatively strong cookbook and handicraft sections, for example, while having little on auto mechanics or sports. In fiction there may be a large romance collection, but few westerns or other materials

for men. The collection may also be affected by the typical age of the club member. If the club is made up of younger women, for example, the library may have a strong children's section, while a library controlled by a club made up of older women might be weaker in children's services.

The Personal Project. Occasionally, a small town library may be strongly dominated by either an individual board member or the librarian. When this occurs the functions of the library can become secondary to the ego needs of this person. A strong board president may be so deeply involved in the library, for example, that the librarian becomes little more than a clerk. Or a librarian may operate a library virtually without a board. In a few instances a legally appointed board may not even exist. More typically in this situation, however, the board exists but operates only to ratify the decisions already made and implemented by the librarian.

It is important to realize that this meaning is not just held by the individual who has the library as her or his personal project. The community by and large has also accepted this view of the library. Thus, the way that community members will feel about the library will reflect the way that they feel about the person. If the person has influence within the community, the needs of the library are likely to be met; if the individual has little power, the library's needs will be given relatively little priority.

This kind of library can sometimes be difficult to identify if a board exists. In general, when no decision is ever made without deferring to the judgment of a single person, it is a fairly safe assumption that the library is of this kind.

The Cultural Fortress. The library takes on the meaning of the cultural fortress when the board or the librarian views the primary purpose of the library to be to "uplift" the community standards of art and literature. This meaning usually has few community adherents, but frequently these adherents are appointed to the board. Typically, these board members will not eliminate popular services that already exist, but they fight a rear guard battle to keep the library's "standards" from being further "eroded."

The issue often surfaces when popular new media come to the fore. Libraries may refuse to carry, or at least purchase, paperbacks, for example. They may be slow to get into video, arguing that this may contribute to "illiteracy." Or they may accept new media only as non-essential library services, for which fees can be charged.

This meaning can have very important implications for the community, even if it is not the focus of the library itself. If community members view the library as a cultural fortress, they may feel that the library has nothing that will interest them. Needless to say this can have can have very negative results for library usage and support.

The Progressive Symbol. In some small communities, there is a strong cultural split between the older, "native" residents, and the younger people who typically come into the community to provide professional services. The younger group may include such people as teachers, ministers, bankers, younger businessman, lawyers, doctors and the spouses of these professionals. When this situation occurs, the "new people" may see themselves as the champions of change. They may strongly support school

reform, for example, and it is not unusual for them to take a particular interest in the public library. Frequently, they will seek seats on the library board. They may either become the dominant force on the board, or they may bring conflict to the board as a "progressive" minority that pushes change while the older board members resist it.

This situation makes the library into a symbol for the progressive group's ambitions. It can have either very negative or very positive effects on library services, depending on whether this group can develop any power in the community. For example, if the city council is made up of the conservative element and the library board is dominated by the progressives, the library's budget may suffer because the library is seen as one of the progressive group's challenges to the status quo. If the progressive group gains power, however, the library may be enhanced.

Although the consultant may feel a strong affinity for the ambitions of the progressives, it is important that relationships with both groups be maintained, particularly if both groups are represented on the board and staff. To side too strongly with the progressives may make it impossible for the consultant to work with the "old guard" who may still control the library or the library's funding source.

The Memorial. The town that is stagnating or even dying often creates symbols of its more prosperous past. The library, especially if it has an attractive older building, may take on this meaning. When this occurs the library building can take on an exaggerated importance. The board may give up vital current services for unnecessary remodelling, or they may stay in an inappropriate building for fear that

it will be torn down if empty. The library may also serve as a personal memorial. It is not uncommon for a library to be named after a benefactor, for example. Even if a library has not been given a benefactor's name, it may serve as a personal memorial to some family or families in the community. Someone from the family may have been a long-time board member or librarian, for example, and this makes the library an important institution to the family, even if they never use it.

People who view the library as a memorial may be very resistant to any change in its building or services. If a powerful family in the community views the library in this way, it may be much more difficult to bring about meaningful innovation.

The Community Symbol. The community symbol meaning is very much like the memorial meaning of the library. Unlike the memorial meaning that celebrates the community's past, however, the library as community symbol is designed to show that the community has a future. The library as community symbol is a library that is started as a response to the community decline. The community, for example, may lose its high school to consolidation, so it starts a library.

Frequently, such libraries are established with little view to the real cost of adequate library service. There may, in fact, be much better alternatives for delivering library service to the community. But the functions of the library may not be particularly important to the community in this situation; it is the library's symbolic value that the community is interested in.

Since the library as a community symbol is typically a new library, it may be less difficult to bring about change than when the library is viewed as a memorial.

The problem in this situation is one of raising resources for something that the community may not see as especially important, particularly when the community's resources are in decline. The symbolic value of the library will exist as long as there is a building and a sign, so the community may have to be sold on the idea that quality library services are also important.

The Analysis of Power Through a Library's History

What is clear from the brief listing of meanings above is that many of the meanings of the public library have more to do with social and political power than they do with information and books. Moreover, the library may have many different meanings to different groups within the community. A women's club may see it as their project; a family may see it as a monument to their grandmother; young progressives, some of whom may be members of the women's club, may see it as an opportunity to make needed changes in the community; older professionals may see it as a cultural fortress, and so on.

The consultant may not have to deal in any depth with some of these meanings, because the meanings are not backed by a significant power base. For example, if the family that sees the library as a monument to their grandmother is not active in community affairs, and if it has relatively little influence on its neighbors, this meaning may have little or no influence on the decision making

process for the library. The consultant may have to deal with this family's concerns on an individual basis, but their feelings will not be likely to affect the potential for change.

If, on the other hand, the family is powerful in the community and is represented on the library board or on the staff, this meaning will have much more influence on the rate of change or even the possibility of change for the library.

The analysis of the power of the different community meanings for the library, then, will be a constant concern for the rural library consultant. One of the best places to begin with such an analysis is with the history of the library.

Five Historical Paradigms

Although each library's history will have many unique features based on the history of the community and the personalities involved, in my experience, there seem to be at least five distinct historical paradigms for the establishment of rural libraries.

The Women's Club Paradigm. During the late 1800's and early 1900's, women's clubs were an important part of the movement for social and political reform. Advocating progressive causes ranging from women's suffrage to prohibition to school reform, these clubs provided cultural leadership in many small towns across America.

One major project of many such clubs was the establishment of public libraries, and the unsung heroines of the American public library movement were the women

who made up the numerous women's clubs that began public libraries in their communities. According to one source, the American Library Association estimated that fully three quarters of American libraries operating in 1933 were begun in this manner.[1]

Libraries which were established by women's clubs and which continue to be dominated by women's clubs are certain to have a strong "club project" meaning. The consultant in this situation will need to establish a good working relationship with the club and will need to understand the library from the club's point of view if changes are to be made. What kind of women does the club represent? Is a club made up primarily of older women who have been in the community for a long time? If so, it is likely to look at the library very differently than a club made up of younger women who have recently moved into the community.

While both clubs may see the library as "the club's library" they may have very different conceptions of what a good library is. The older club may see the library as a cultural fortress or as a memorial, while the club made up of younger women might see the library as a school library substitute or a progressive symbol.

In any case, the major problem with the women's club library is that historically it has been seen as a library primarily for women and perhaps children. Men have taken little interest in it, and because men normally control the government decision making structure of small towns, library services are likely to suffer. Typically, small town libraries that have not been able to shed their women's club image have difficulty being taken seriously by the city council. The library may

not even be seen as a department of the city government, and only token amounts of money may be given toward the library's budget: in some cases so little that the council does not even expect an accounting for the funds.

The long range goal of the library consultant in this situation should be to help the club and the community see the library as a legally established public agency, whose services are dictated by the needs of the entire community rather than a relatively small group of women. To accomplish this goal, the consultant must begin, however, with the library as it is. Because the library may be the only institution in the community controlled by women, it can be difficult for the women's club to share the control of the library with men. It is not unusual to hear of ambivalence among club members about the library's relationship to the city government. They may want more funding from the city council, but they are reluctant to seek it if they feel that the council will demand more control.

The consultant must continue to point out the advantages of expanding the power base for the library, while at the same time working to alleviate the fears, some of which may be justified, about city council interference with the workings of the library. Perhaps the best place to start, once the confidence of the club has been gained, is to clarify the legal status of the library. State law may require that the library have been established by city ordinance, for example, but such an ordinance may not exist. In such a case, getting the club to ask the city council to legally establish the library brings the library to the council's attention in a relatively non-

threatening way, while at the same time pointing out to both the council and the women's club the legal requirements for running a public library.

The Grant-Created Library Paradigm. In the early part of this century, numerous public library buildings were erected with the help of grants from charitable persons or foundations. The most famous of these, of course, are the Carnegie libraries. Beginning in 1886 Andrew Carnegie donated money to 1412 communities to erect public library buildings.[2] Most of these communities were small towns, as 78% of them constructed buildings costing less than $20,000.[3] Carnegie, however, was not the only benefactor of public libraries. Other towns received substantial funds from local sources; in a few cases communities were even given farms or other money making resources to support their public library. More recently some small town public libraries have been able to acquire new buildings using LSCA Title II funds.

The infusion of a large amount of money into a library frequently changed the course of the library's history. Carnegie grants and LSCA funds have required local matching funds. To raise this money, community support has had to be built. In many cases this has been done by the town's business community, who then have had a greater stake in the development of the library. In the cases where gifts came with no strings attached, the large amount of money available to the library gave it added importance in the eyes of the community.

To put it bluntly, when a relatively large amount of money came into a town's public library so did the interest of the town's male population, and this interest has

tended to remain. I have worked with six communities that built Carnegie libraries between 1903 and 1915. They serve communities whose population range from less than 1,000 to over 12,000. Although at least one of them began its existence as a women's club library, and most have been supported by women's club activities throughout their history, none of them is now dominated by a women's club, and all of them currently have men serving on their boards. In two other instances, I have worked with women's club library efforts that sought LSCA Title II funds. In both cases men were soon actively serving on the library boards.

Grant-created libraries tend to be better funded than other kinds of small town public libraries. Their separate library building gives them a greater visibility in their communities, and their broader board representation, including at times members of the male power elite, tends to give them greater clout with their funding agencies.

In addition to the functional meaning, older grant-created libraries tend to take on the cultural fortress and the memorial meanings. Board members often are the community's intellectual leaders, and these people may see the library's role to provide "cultural uplift" for the rest of the community. The cultural fortress meaning also fits well into the Carnegie concept of library service. The buildings tend to look like fortresses, and the numerous steps certainly play into the idea of lifting oneself up. So the cultural fortress concept may have a good deal of historical and even architectural significance in some communities.

It is important for the consultant working with a library with a heavy cultural fortress meaning to help the board and staff understand the changes that have occurred in library service, but at the same time to be sympathetic to the community's viewpoint. I once attended a board meeting where the issue of charging fees for videos was being discussed. One board member expressed her feeling that videos were a frill, and not an essential library service. I pointed out that at one time some board members around the country had felt the same way about adult fiction and children's services. I then expressed how important videos can be in helping us to gain an understanding of the world. I suggested that a video of the movie Gandhi, for example, will probably have more lasting cultural value than many bestselling books. In discussing the history of library service and pointing to the cultural value of some videos, I tried to address her desire for the library to serve the purpose of cultural uplift.

The library buildings built with grant funds seem to have even a more important role to play in creating a memorial meaning for the grant-created library. Many Carnegie buildings have been put on historical registers, and moving the library out of its Carnegie building or a building connected with some prominent name in the town's history can become a serious problem. It is not uncommon for towns to spend more money renovating an older building than they would spend on erecting a new one, even though the older building will continue to present problems with handicapped accessibility and the numerous other difficulties that come from buildings that were created for another era.

In working with libraries that are considering leaving their old building behind, it is important that the consultant be aware of the potential problems of renovating an older building. Buildings erected fifty years ago or more will need to have extensive remodelling in order to meet the electrical needs of our computer and telephone based information system. Because there was a greater emphasis on using resources within the library rather than checking them out, buildings were frequently built with small rooms that create difficulties for library security. Handicapped accessibility is another important issue. These practical issues, however, may be less important than the sentiment attached to the old building. Here, the consultant can perform a real service by suggesting new uses for the old building. Saving the old building can be one of the most important points of community resistance to a new library building. Thus, finding possible uses for the historic building that guarantee its continued existence can be the most vital step in the process of obtaining a new building.

Board traditions for grant libraries may at times also make these libraries open to both the school library substitute meaning and the progressive symbol meaning. If, for example, it has been traditional to have a large number of educators on the library board, they may push the library needs of the schools to the detriment of other public library functions. Similarly, the library board may traditionally be made up of younger professional people, who may see it as a place to begin to promote their ideas for community development.

Since grant-created library boards and staff tend to be more representative of their communities than women's club libraries or personal project libraries, it may be less important for the consultant to make them aware of community needs and interests, although this is always an important function for a rural library consultant. Instead, it may be more important for the consultant to concentrate on helping the board and staff develop a broader view of public library service than they hold. This could be particularly important in libraries which are tending toward the school library substitute meaning. The ultimate goal for the consultant working with this kind of small town library, then, may be to help the board and staff expand their knowledge about the functions of public libraries.

School-Public Library Paradigm. Since its inception the public library has been identified as an educational institution. In many states, therefore, schools and public libraries have been closely allied. In some states, e.g. Idaho, Michigan, and Missouri, local school boards were granted the authority to provide public library service. In some communities, public library branches have been located in schools; in many others it has been considered desirable to locate new public library buildings near schools. In some cases, school boards have donated the land on which to build a public library so it would be near to a school.

Public libraries that have had a strong historical tie to a particular school or school system are the most likely to take on a strong school library substitute meaning in their communities. Broadening the purpose of the public library in this situation can be very difficult, because there will be strong elements within the

community that will be opposed to such a change, and these elements also are likely to be the strongest library supporters. If improving adult services, for example, means cutting children's services that are supporting a part of the school curriculum, complaints are likely to be heard from educators, students and parents.

The goal of a consultant working with this kind of library should be to help the board and staff develop a perspective of the library as a community resource, rather than just a school resource. When board or staff members feel the need for change themselves, they must also be taught how to build community support. Funding options, such as a contract for providing services to the school, should also be explored, as well as service options that will make the library more attractive to adults.

The Personal Project Library Paradigm. In 1983, Jason Hardman, a thirteen year old boy, was given a certificate of achievement and appreciation by the National Council on Libraries and Information Science, for starting a public library in Elsinore, Utah (population 680).[4] While this boy's age made his effort to create a library a news event, it is not that unusual for one person in a small town to create or maintain a public library.

Personal project libraries may swing between personal projects and women's clubs projects or community projects. For example, a library may have been started by a women's club, but then was taken over by an individual. It is often hard to distinguish this kind of library from the one dominated by the women's club library, if some help continues to come from the club. In general, the personal project library

is distinguished because a single individual carries the work forward or is the obvious and continuous motivator for the library.

The library whose history is dominated by a single individual is, of course, most likely to carry the meaning of a personal project, but it also may carry either a memorial meaning or a community symbol meaning or even a school library substitute meaning, if the individual involved is concerned about the school.

Unlike the women's club library that carries some level of community support, the library consultant encountering a personal project library must first determine whether working with this library is worth the time. This is especially true if the library is new and the chances of better support are marginal. Undoubtedly, many personal project libraries die aborning; others may hold on for awhile, but never can provide adequate service. If the consultant is invited early into such a project, it is best to describe other options and to encourage support for one of these alternatives.

If the library does look potentially viable, however, the consultant's goal must be to help the library broaden its support. This may require the consultant to educate the dominant person about what good library service is by describing it in detail or by taking her or him on tours of successful libraries. If the individual is truly interested in good library service, as most are, she or he will soon see the need for wider support for the library. It should be emphasized that in a small town, the interest that she or he has already shown in the library will almost certainly guarantee some leadership role, either as a board member or librarian.

The Community Project Library Paradigm. A community project library is one which is begun by several groups within a small town without outside funding. This type of library is small, is started with donated books, and has little or no funding. Typically, this library carries the primary meaning of a community symbol, although it may also carry a meaning as a school library substitute, a progressive symbol or a personal project. To many of those who start the library, the functional meaning may have relatively little importance. For them the library is a symbol of community pride.

In recent years, this kind of library has been prevalent in communities that are struggling to maintain their identity. Often, such towns may be too small and too poor to adequately support their own public library. From a functional point of view it would be better for such a town to contract with another library for service or to obtain a bookmobile stop. Neither of these options, however, meet the real need that is expressed by the establishment of the library. The real purpose of the community project library is to serve as a symbol of the continued vitality of the community.

The community project library presents a dilemma for the library consultant. The library is not likely to ever provide adequate library service, yet at the same time it may be the only library service available to the community. If other options are available, and it is early enough in the process, the consultant, of course, should suggest the better alternatives. If the library is a going concern, the consultant should first determine if there is enough interest in the functional aspects of the library to warrant any consultant services. If it is clear that there is little interest

in the library beyond its symbolism, it probably is a waste of time to work within the situation, although periodic contacts should be made in case things change.

If, on the other hand, there does appear to be real interest in providing adequate library services, the consultant may want to help the library board develop a mission statement and plan, and to view the possible options that could provide some kind of permanent presence in the community while still linking the community to the larger library world. A book station, supported through a library system or regional library, for example, may provide this kind of solution to the problem.

Conclusion

A public library's meaning within any community is never pure. Although one meaning may predominate, there will always be others also at work. Different groups within the community will see the library differently. Any given individual may also assign several different meanings for the library. In stating that small town libraries may have many different meanings to their communities, I am in no way implying that small town people are not interested in quality library services. I am saying, however, that the support for libraries (whether rural or metropolitan) usually comes from many different motivations in addition to the desire for good library service. Similarly, resistance to change may have little or nothing to do with the functional purpose of the library.

Libraries are, after all, institutions that are created by human beings, and human motivations are never pure and simple. Ultimately, library consultants must

remember that the libraries with which we work are not "our" libraries. They belong to the communities that built them and support them, and in the end they will be the libraries that those communities want them to be.

Rural library consultants who treat the improvement of library services as merely a technical problem, therefore, will soon become frustrated. Rather than cursing the mixed motives of rural library supporters, we need to find ways to create good library services while still accommodating these human needs. Helping to develop high quality libraries in these contexts requires creativity and a sense of reality. It is not work for the faint hearted; there will be times of frustration when progress will seem to be impossible. When success comes, however, it can provide the library consultant with a great sense of accomplishment and moments of real joy.

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Department of Library Science
Clarion University of Pennsylvania

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CONTENTS

Key Issues in Rural Development 3
Daryl Heasley

The Role of Information in Rural Economic Development 9
Jonathan Johnson

How RIC Provides Answers for Rural America 27
Patricia John

Is Renewed Leadership the Answer? 39
Jim Killacky

The Use of State Information Resources 45
Howard McGinn

Schools Supporting the Rural Infrastructure 55
Sue Raftery

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KEY ISSUES IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

by

Daryl K. Heasley

OVERVIEW

An essential fact faces most rural localities; as development occurs many small and rural communities are falling behind their metropolitan and suburban counterparts in dealing adequately with the issues at hand. Moreover, policies and practices intended to enhance rural development have been fragmented or ineffectively implemented.

Leaders and policy makers have been confused about the meaning of rural development. To many, rural implies an agricultural arena for food and fiber production, while development implies change, growth, and ready access to the products and services of an urban society. Today, while development still implies better access to goods and services, rural implies low population density and uneven access to the opportunities that are occurring in more highly "urbanized" localities. Enhancement of agriculture and other rural natural resources does not necessarily enhance social and economic development in rural areas.

Rural localities are beset by an increasingly complex set of economic, social, environmental, and political forces stemming from both the U.S. metropolitan and global societies. National and worldwide economic restructuring with or without the complicity of national and local politics, produces shifts in local economic and natural-resource infrastructures. Other forces, endemic to the fabric of American society, place increasing demands on local institutions to provide more effective services while receiving decreasing public support. Institutions for education, health care, youth and family services, families at risk, social equity, elderly and handicapped care, and infrastructural

maintenance and improvement are additional pressures to change and reorganize for greater effectiveness.

While rural localities are affected by these forces, they often lack the individual and organizational resources, expertise, and problem solving skills required to deal effectively with their situations. Many rural localities have volunteer, part-time leaders and managers, while their urban counterparts engage full-time professionals to deal with public issues. Efforts to maintain and improve the viability and well-being of rural areas must be guided by an awareness of such structural imbalances. Rural development programs require strategies sensitive to these similarities and to unique needs.

Structural and economic changes are creating new opportunities for rural economies while at the same time making them more vulnerable. Transportation and information linkages in rural areas are creating new patterns of employment, marketing, and other ties; but the rapidly increasing use can strain the physical infrastructure of these localities.

Environmental pressures, economic opportunities and challenges, and other changes will require greater human capital and institutional capacity. Our most critical resources for managing changes in rural areas are knowledgeable people and the viable groups they form. Based on the preceding here are key concepts driving a strategy for rural development.

1. Constructively using the natural environment in an urbanizing region.

2. Enhance rural economic productivity and adaptability.

3. Enhance institutions that contribute to the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

4. Enhance policy leadership, management capacity, and strategic planning to support rural community viability.

These issues are not the only ones affecting rural areas. But, they are among those that are having the greatest impacts, and they are at the core of rural development strategies. They also provide excellent opportunities for

developing, implementing, and evaluating rural development programs. Since the issues are so interrelated, the focus for rural development must be holistic, encompassing aspects of all four issue areas, and their implications for individuals, families, communities, and institutions serving rural people.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES EXPANDED

If the quantity and quality of natural resources in the U.S. and world-wide are to be maintained for current and multi-future uses, traditional approaches to their management and use must be changed. Attention must be given to a more holistic perspective, one that is guided by and in tune with a multi-objective approach. This approach must accommodate the differing objectives of rural resource owners, urban dwellers, and the general public who rely on rural land, air, and water resources for sustenance, recreation, and aesthetics. New awareness of the severe frictions among competing interests has led to increasing regulation of our rural resources.

We need to shift toward constructive use of these rural resources, incorporating current production uses with regeneration and preservation practices for future generations. This change will require an adjustment from single-use practices to more multiple-use strategies.

ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY

Major socio-economic changes are under way that will affect the ability of the U.S. to maintain productive and sustainable rural economies. Rural economies face particular problems in adapting to these changes because of their small size, geographic isolation, low population density, lack of employment diversification, and traditional dependence on natural resource based industries and routine manufacturing. Forces of change include:

1. Structural realignments affecting the economic bases of rural economies. Among the key realignments are: integration with the global marketplace, technological innovations influencing the labor, management and capital requirements of rural businesses, need for the value-added industry, which sustains natural resource economies in remote areas of our region.

2. Cyclical trends in the national and global economies affecting the stability and growth of local rural economies. These trends include small, industrially specialized (manufacturing-dependent) economies, which are particularly vulnerable to macro-economic shifts; and new opportunities for businesses to anticipate and plan for such challenges.

3. More effective transportation and information linkages, which have increased rural-urban and regional economic integration. Such integration provides opportunities for employment, marketing, tourism, and inter-local cooperation.

Activities should focus on ameliorating problems and taking advantage of potential opportunities to help public and private decision makers adjust to the changes.

INSTITUTIONS

Consistent with the premise that all people, regardless of age, race, ethnic origin, or location, should have equal access to the services they need for social well-being. The U.S. and local areas must respond to the fact that existing services are not meeting the special needs of some population groupings, especially in rural areas. In particular, federal, state, and especially local entities are challenged to perform three key tasks: to assess the delivery of services to rural communities, families, and individuals; to inform policy makers and others of the unique and pressing needs of rural groupings for human services; and to join with other groups and organizations in the search for ways of meeting these unmet needs.

Among the many population segments in the rural areas of the U.S. and among the many service needs that affect rural well-being, some groupings and services stand out as deserving top priority in rural development planning and programming. Groupings in urgent need of special attention in small and rural areas include age-related population segments (youth and the elderly), poor and disadvantaged individuals and families, and the culturally diverse groupings now found in many rural communities. Service areas that require special attention include housing, nutrition, health, education, transportation, and

communications. The objective of information providers in responding to these needs is to present an improved understanding of issues, choices, and possible policy initiatives to service providers, service consumers, policy makers, and the community (including voters and taxpayers).

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Agendas of local leaders and decision-makers in small and rural localities are becoming more controversial, complex, and technical. Increasing societal awareness of various issues places new burdens on rural leaders and administrators and requires a breadth of decision-making on a scale not previously faced in rural localities.

These issues include concerns about the environment and natural resources; roads, highways, and infrastructure; environmental impacts; waste management and water quality; fire protection and law enforcement; health care and recreation; education and social service; liability insurance and risk management; and changing local economies and local economic export and tax bases.

The ability and effectiveness of local officials to provide public policy direction in response to societal demands represented by federal and state mandates, and to provide appropriate and adequate public services, depend on the adequacy of local institutions and their decision-making and implementation methods. Part-time citizen politicians, high turnover in leadership and policy positions, shortage of staff to provide for technical expertise and administration, and increased financial pressures to meet growing internal and mandated demands all leave rural localities at a disadvantage relative to more urban places. If rural localities are to function effectively in dealing with the issues they face, sophisticated and workable planning and policies that require access to considerable expertise must be generated. Plans and policies must then be managed and administered efficiently to take advantage of available local resources and future opportunities.

If policy leadership, management capacity, and strategic planning to support rural community governance are to be enhanced, information must be useful, timely, deliverable, workable, affordable, and have utility for users.

So, what are some roles for libraries and librarians in helping to ameliorate rural development issues?

Publicize the types of information you can make available to agencies, organizations, local governmental units, institutions, special interest groups, and communities which are addressing, and of the four key rural development issues. Many of these established entities, especially, are not aware of the range of information local libraries, through the county, state, and national systems can access.

Initiate special information packages for such entities. Do not wait for a visit, you be the visitor!

Feature a local public issue and the accompanying resources you can access to "tease the curiosity" of library patrons.

Suggest/Offer the library meeting room for such purposes.

Involve yourself as an interested citizen as a librarian in an issue of your choice.

Balance proactive, assertive roles with reactive, passive roles. This point summarizes the above points.

The task demands the highest level of scholarly research as well as delivery of useful products to support and maximize the local educational outreach effort. The library systems are uniquely well adapted and explicitly chartered to serve rural America. These units must work together with other units that may be interested in rural development. If a balanced strategy is to result, this effort must focus on the relationship of individuals, families, institutions, and communities with the environment. In the end, a viable rural community is one that has strength demographically, socially, and economically. Such strengths depend on equitable distribution of and access to goods and services. They also depend on sustainable environmental conservation practices among people in the rural and metropolitan areas of the U.S.

Daryl Heasley is the Director of the Northeast Regional Center for Rual Development and Associate Professor for Rural Sociology at The Pennsylvania State University in University Park, Pennsylvania.

THE ROLE OF INFORMATION IN RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

by

Jonathan Johnson

Speech Reprint

INTRODUCTION

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania is a legislative agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly. Created in 1987, as part of the Rural Pennsylvania Revitalization Act, the Center serves as a focal point for rural policy development. The Center has three responsibilities: develop rural policy initiatives, provide information on rural issues, and support rural policy research. In addition, the Center maintains an extensive database on Pennsylvania's rural economic, demographic, and social conditions.

Supporting rural policy research is the biggest component of the Center's activities. Through a competitive grants program, the Center funds policy-oriented research. That is, research that produces information the General Assembly can use to help it make policy decisions. In past years, grant research has become the basis for legislative initiatives. Currently, the Center is funding nine university grants in such areas as assessing the impact of residential development on rural communities, developing a rural cost-of-living index, and ways to improve economic development staff.

As a policy analyst, my job is to provide the General Assembly with information on rural issues. Information and communications are the tools of my trade. They are also the tools used in rural economic development.

This afternoon, I am going to examine information used by legislators in formulating rural economic and community development policies. To do so, I will first look at the sources of information used in formulating policies. Next,

I will examine the uses and abuses of information in modeling policies. And finally, I will explore ways to make information more useful. The purpose of this behind-the-scenes look is to show information plays a role in formulating government developmental policies.

Before we begin, however, I would like to expand the scope of this paper by combining economic development with community development. Traditionally, economic development was the domain of industry and business, while community development was something governments did. However, as the 1980s have painfully shown, there is no clear dichotomy between business and government. Both are mutually dependent. And both work best as partners. In Pennsylvania, the Ben Franklin Partnership Program has become a national model of government successfully promoting advanced technologies to make traditional industries more competitive and to help develop new technology businesses. Consequently, economic and community development are mutually important for rural communities, which for too long have lacked both.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

One day when in the library I ran across a master's essay entitled, "The Impact of Photocopiers on the State General Assembly." Written in the late 1960s before photocopiers were common, the essay predicted that photocopiers would reduce partisan animosity and produce better legislation by enabling information to be quickly disseminated.

Photocopiers, computers, faxes, and other technological hardware have certainly increased the speed and availability of information. Today, a rural legislator can sit in his or her district office and receive detailed analysis on any bill or policy decision without having to travel to the capitol. Despite our high-tech ability to communicate, instant information has done little to reduce partisan rivalry or produce good policy decisions. Therefore, when looking at the role of information in policy-making, it is best to look at the message, not the messenger.

Legislators can receive information on economic and community development from one of five sources: legislative, executive, local governments,

academic, and nongovernment. Yet, as we will see, there is a great deal of overlap between each of these groups.

Legislative

As we all know, most states have three separate, but equal, branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial. Each produces its own information. However, the ability of the executive branch to collect and analyze information often overshadows the other two branches. So, as not to be in the dark, many state assemblies have set up their own informational units. Structurally, these units are to be independent sources of information used to evaluate the governor's proposals. The Library of Congress was, in part, created to fulfill this function at the national level.

Generally, legislative informational units fall into one of three groups: committees and joint committees, research and informational offices, and legislative agencies. In many capitols, committees and joint committees are among the most influenual sources of information. Usually staffed by experts in their field, their job is to formulate, investigate, and when necessary, amend legislation. The information supplied by these agencies is the synthesis of public hearings and summaries of executive and academic research. Because of time pressure, committee staffers rarely have the opportunity to collect primary data.

The number of committees can range from over 85 in Missouri and New York to 14 in Nebraska with its one House. The average is 34 per state, with 15 in the Senate and 19 in the House. Thirteen state assemblies have committees to examine urban affairs. But, only seven states have rural affairs committees.[1] In most instances, rural issues are lumped together under the agricultural affairs committee.

In some states, research and informational offices operate as a political arm of their caucus. Their function is to keep the public informed on legislative matters and to help formulate new policy initiatives. In most instances, these offices are staffed by generalists with roladexes the size of basketballs. Like committees, the information supplied by research and informational offices highlight the policy implications of executive, academic, and nongovernmen-

tal research. These offices also examine what other states are doing and whether or not their programs can be used as models. The most important role for research and informational offices, however, is getting new ideas on paper and getting the news out. Pennsylvania, New York, and Minnesota have the largest number of caucus research/informational offices. Over half the states have no such offices.

There are four general categories of legislative agencies: legal, administration, oversight, and research. The first two agencies focus on legislative housekeeping issues. That is, keeping track of statutes and code revisions, computer services, office supplies, etc. Oversight agencies do performance and fiscal evaluations of executive branch agencies. These audits are used to weed out corruption and ensure laws are being faithfully executed. Research agencies, like the Rural Center, examine policy issues in greater detail and make legislative recommendations. With a longer time frame than committee and caucus research offices, research agencies often contract projects to colleges and universities. Minnesota, Michigan, and Pennsylvania have the most legislative agencies. Eleven states have only one agency. The information supplied by these agencies can play an important role in setting the policy agenda and analyzing the issues.

Executive

The executive branch is at once an information cornucopia and a statistical labyrinth. Often mandated by law, executive agencies collect information on almost everything: from unemployment rates to birth weight; miles of sewage pipelines to the number of high school dropouts. At the federal level, the Census Bureau is, of course, the granddaddy of all informational sources. Despite the seemingly overabundance of information, getting the data you need can be challenging. With numerous agencies, finding the right office requires detective work. It also requires persistence. In many cases, your telephone call can be transferred at least a dozen times.

As an information source, executive agencies generally supply two types of information, numerical data and reports. The numerical data is just that, page after page of numbers on everything from employment to hospital beds. Fortunately, many agencies are beginning to provide the data on computer

disks that can be easily downloaded into any computer. The availability of data on floppy disks overcomes one of the biggest hurdles in data analysis – inputting.

Although often voluminous, the reports published by executive agencies are useful for understanding the mechanics of a program or issue. They are also useful for assessing trends and as indicators of future executive initiatives. Along with empirical information, executive agencies also supply normative information. Through hearings and informal discussions, executive officials will communicate to legislators the problems of their agency's constituents and highlight solutions. Because politics is an interpersonal enterprise, such communications are often more important than data and reports.

Within any agency, information used in legislative decisions can come from any one of a dozen sources. Rarely is access restricted. The most common source, however, is the secretary's officer or the legislative liaison. Another important source of information is state data centers. In 70 percent of the fifty states, the lead data center is an executive agency. Ten percent of the state data centers are housed within the state library, the rest are located at universities.[2]

Local Governments

Local governments can be an invaluable source of information to state policymakers. In many states, local officials are directly responsible for implementing programs. Also they have more direct contact with citizens than state officials. Consequently, when making policy decisions, local government officials are called upon to provide two types of information: implementation feasibility and level of grassroots support.

In large states, like Pennsylvania, statewide programs can be difficult to implement. For example, a program designed to help the urban homeless may be unworkable in a rural county. Local officials are often in the best position to judge the feasibility of such programs. Moreover, they provide information of the probable cost of the program and its likelihood of success. Similarly, a local official is often the first person residents call with a problem. This direct contact enables them to identify the need for new programs or problems with existing programs. It also enables them to judge where the greatest need is in their

community. In rural communities, the input of local officials is especially important. Unlike urban areas that have a wide diversity of groups to support citizens' interests, rural residents often lack spokespersons. Local officials help give rural residents a voice in policy decisions.

Academic

In each state, colleges and universities are one of the greatest information depositories. With experts in almost every subject, these institutions have made valuable contributions to their state's policy research and formulation. As an informational source, colleges and university supply three types of information: consultation, basic research, and general information.

The consultation services provided by colleges and universities can range from advice on economic modeling to historical analysis. Consultants are used in the technical analysis of an issue. In addition to their expertise, consultants are called upon as independent sources of information. Legislators request college and universities to perform basic research in both the social and physical sciences. This information, for example, can be used to evaluate new management techniques or experimental road surfacing materials before they are implemented. In most instances, the basic research directly funded by general assemblies focuses on application rather than theory. Finally, colleges and universities supply policymakers with general information. Often this information comes from the schools' libraries. It is used to fill in the gaps. In most cases, it is accessed through informal phone calls to professors. In the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, this relationship has been formalized through a special liaison office and the state-own and state-related universities.

Nongovernment

Nongovernment sources of information are as important to policymakers as governmental sources. These sources represent alternative methods, special concerns, and competing ideas. Ignoring these informational sources would make for poor policies. As we will see shortly, information plays a vital role in building a consensus, both inside and outside government. There are, of course, many nongovernment actors that can supply information for making policy decisions. To save time, however, we will limit ourselves to just two: lobbvists and the media.

The role of a lobbyist is to influence policy decisions. Although the public views lobbyists with suspicion for advocating narrow interests, lobbyists provide reasoned opinions, information, and technical assistance to policymakers. This information, of course, represents the views of the organization the lobbyist is representing. Such views can be extremely useful when deciding policies that affect a particular group of people. Moreover, lobbyists enable a diverse organization to speak with one voice such as the township supervisors, rural school districts, rural utilities, etc.

Sometimes called the fourth branch of government, the media is an informational institution. The media plays an important role in identifying issues and pressuring policymakers to take action. However, one of the unique roles of the media is information dissemination. In the Pennsylvania General Assembly, each of the four caucuses puts together a daily packet of statewide newspaper clippings. These clippings enable both members and staffers to quickly gauge state opinions on a variety of policy issues. In addition, the media provides policymakers with an easily accessed forum from which to explain their actions.

INFORMATIONAL SHORTCOMINGS

Despite the many sources of information there are a number of informational shortcomings which plague all policy decisions. Some of these include information availability; time constraints; methodological considerations; and use of the "wrong" information. The first two of these shortcomings deal with informational access; the second two, with the information itself.

Information Availability

Information is not free. Someone has to define what is to be collected and how to collect it. Then the information must be collected, processed, analyzed, distributed, and finally stored. Because this process requires money, no government or private organization can collect all the information available on a subject. The shortage becomes all too apparent when it is needed to make policy decisions. For example, a recent Rural Center request was to develop an alternative formula for hospital medical assistance reimbursements. One of the major stumbling blocks was cost-of-living adjustments. Urban hospitals wanted

one rate while rural hospitals wanted another. Each group claimed to have higher costs than the other. To confuse matters, the federal government's cost-of-living index is only collected for major urban areas and statewide. There is no rural cost-of-living index. The information was unavailable. Fortunately, the Center was able to persuade committee members to accept different criteria of unemployment and per capita income – data which was readily available. To make a long story short, the Rural Center's next research proposal targeted the creation of a rural cost-of-living index. Therefore, while information may seem abundant, it is not always the "right stuff."

Time Constraints

The Constitution requires a census to be collected every ten years. The information collected by the Census Bureau provides a very useful window from which to view changes in American society. Unfortunately, ten years is a long time to wait. Last year, while the Census data was being collected, the Rural Center, along with other agencies, was forced to rely on projections, estimations, and old data to describe rural conditions. Except for historical analysis, information, especially statistical data, has a very short shelf life. Consequently, one of the most serious problems in accessing information is its timeliness. No one wants outdated information, and no one likes to wait for new information to be released. As a result, agencies like the Rural Center are forced to rely on update sheets to keep policymakers informed.

Methodological Considerations

How was the information collected? How was it analyzed? What implicit assumptions were made? These are the types of questions that give analysts like myself sleepless nights. Understanding how information is collected and analyzed is important to avoid making wrong assumptions and wrong conclusions. This is especially critical when examining cause-and-effect relationships. Some lesser, but equally important, methodological considerations include how the information is being presented. It is amazing in the age of computer spreadsheets and $5 calculators how many data tables do not add up to their reported total. It is equally amazing how many variables are mislabeled and how many charts and figures are irrelevant to the subject being discussed. A word of

advice: when asking someone why their columns don't add up, be very careful. Some people take their data very personally.

Using "Wrong" Information

Information comes in many forms. As a result, it is easy to use the wrong yardstick. When examining rural conditions, there are many measures that can be used such as unemployment rates, hospital beds per 1,000, number of daycare centers, etc. Each of these was designed to measure one thing. However, when formulating policies, single measures are forced to be surrogates for other conditions. For example, the number of hospital beds is frequently used to gauge county health care and unemployment as a yardstick to measure economic vitality. At best, such measures are only cloudy indicators of larger conditions. Moreover, these types of measures rarely address the quality of services or conditions. Having more daycare centers does not mean they are being managed properly or even efficiently. As a result, care should be taken in selecting social indicators.

Identifying Needs/Problems

Rural residents face a host of needs and problems. Some of these are local or even private in nature, while others are state and national in scope. Identifying exactly what these needs and problems are as well as their root causes is an important first step in finding the right solution. Although such information can be gathered in a number of ways, the most common is through a needs assessment. A needs assessment is a detailed evaluation of a community's or region's resources. This assessment can be used to determine whether existing programs are meeting specific needs in areas like housing, transportation, health care, etc. Or, the assessment can be used to inventory issues rural residents want government to resolve.

In addition to a needs assessment, there are other ways to identify needs and problems. For example, public hearings can be a useful tool for gathering information. If held around the state, such hearings enable individuals and organizations to forcefully impress upon policymakers their area's needs and problems. A less intrusive way to identify issues is through data analysis. By carefully comparing indices, researchers can locate communities that are far below the state average, but have been overlooked by state policymakers.

As a policy tool, the information gathered through needs assessment and other methods is extremely useful for identifying problems and for measuring their severity. In addition, this information is useful for bringing the issue(s) to the attention of others – both inside and outside government. This is called getting an issue onto the policy agenda. In many state houses, rural concerns often take a back seat to those in urban areas. Finally, needs assessment can be used to justify budget allocations and priorities.

Identifying Goals

Although most government programs are design to resolve a specific problem, they also are used to address larger social and political goals. Piggybacking programs to larger goals is important for giving a program direction after its initial objectives are met. It is also an important indicator of program success or failure. For rural residents, program goals are useful for

knowing up-front what the government is trying to do and why. This information is useful for communities putting together an action plan.

At the conception stage of a policy or program, information plays a key role in identifying goals. After problems or needs have been recognized, it is not always clear what exactly should be done. For example, in rural areas afflicted with high unemployment, should the government's goal be to persuade traditional manufacturers to reopen their factory gates with various incentives? Or should the state encourage new high-tech or service firms to locate in the region? Or should anything be done at all? These basic questions need to be decided before policies can be formulated. If not, it is more than likely that well-intentioned programs will end up with conflicting goals.

Information can help identify policy goals in one of three ways: first, it can identify the policy's target group(s). In some cases, the target group is self-evident, like teenage mothers or seniors on fixed incomes. In other cases, it is more general and vague, like consumers or manufacturers. Information can be used to locate and define groups with the greatest need. Studies have shown that the more specific the target group, the more successful the policy. Second, information can be used to decide policy outputs. That is, what will the policy end product look like? Will cash vouchers be used or counselling by social workers? Information is necessary for deciding what tools should be used in solving the problems. Finally, in order to link the new policy with existing policies and programs, information on those policies and programs is needed. Information helps answer the questions How will this policy fit into the overall picture? Is it redundant of other government policies? and Does it conflict with other government goals? In our federalist system, state policymakers are especially cautious of these issues in order to ensure that state policies do not conflict with federal or local government initiatives.

Analysis

Up to this point, information is used to identify problems and goals. The next step is applying information to find solutions. In a legislative context, application means analysis. Information plays two roles in the analytical process: formulation of policy options and strategies; and second, outlining

consequences of government actions. Each of these roles uses information to further define solutions to rural problems.

Brainstorming Solutions

Again, once the problem and goals have been identified, the next step is to determine how to implement a policy or program. This is no small task. Among the many decisions that need to be made are the selection of an implementing agency, funding patterns, and start-up time. Moreover, decisions must be made on how the program will work. Information plays a creative role in this process by identifying options.

Most state legislators punt when it comes to the nitty-gritty of how to implement a program. Instead, they outline the program goals, describe how it is to work, and then designate an executive agency to fill in the details. Deciding how a program is supposed to work has been the cause of more than one floor debate. However, in the early stages of the policy process, these decisions usually begin as a list of options. These options can range from the ridiculous to the sublime. They can also be partisan standard-bearers. The first use of information is to make a list of the possible ways to implement the program.

The sources of information used in this process varies. Some officials examine what different states are doing, while others review pertinent literature for theories and ideas, while still others evaluate previous programs to find out what worked and didn't work. The next use of information is to develop criteria by which to narrow the options. This criteria usually involve political, financial, ethical, and other considerations. The weight each element receives is not always objective. Policies concerning hazardous waste sites, for example, are typically measured against heavier political and environmental criteria than say legal or economic development criteria. The end result of this process is a list of two or three workable policy options.

Outlining Policy Consequences

No problem exits in a vacuum. For every policy solution there is a reaction. Often these reactions can be extremely negative as witnessed in many

states with wetland policies. In an effort to protect valuable wetland, farmers and developers have been unable to use the land to earn a living. Understanding policy consequences is important for avoiding unwanted consequences or negative spillovers. It is, of course, impossible to map out all the consequences of a policy. However, with information and analysis, the most glaring deficiencies can be removed in one of two ways: public input and analysis.

Legislators often seek public input into policies in order to measure in their constituency's reaction to a policy proposal. This input can come in many forms. The most formal are hearings. At a hearing, testimony is taken from groups both pro and con. There is also opportunity for these groups to ask questions and to convince legislators of the importance of their point. Although costly and time-consuming, hearings provide a forum for citizens and organizations to voice their concerns. Next to hearings is lobbying. There are many ways to lobby elected officials. Organizations and associations typically employ professional "legislative liaisons." Their job is to keep the organization and its members informed of policy changes and to influence policy decisions. Again, these are rarely cigar chomping, backslapping individuals. Instead, they are usually professionals that provide reasoned opinions and technical assistance to policymakers. In some cases, these lobbyists are former legislative staffers. Unorganized groups can also lobby effectively. By meeting individually with legislators or through protest rallies, these groups can have an impact on policy decisions. An important point to remember is that policy-making involves compromise. Rarely is it a zero-sum game.

A less visible, but equally important, method of identifying and weighing the consequences of legislation is bill analysis. Such analysis can involve cost-benefit analysis, computer modeling, or other types of scientific inquiry. And because policymakers are not technocrats, there is also the analysis of political repercussions. Both types of analyses are important for outlining the consequences of a policy proposal. The information gleaned from this process is extremely useful in the next phase — consensus building.

Consensus Building

One of the most important roles of information in policy-making is consensus building. A consensus is necessary in order to ensure cooperation

and agreement among policymakers. It is also needed to enact policy and programs. Yet, as we all know, achieving a consensus is never easy. On rural issues it can be exceedingly difficult. In the Pennsylvania House, for example, about 28 percent of members represent rural districts. Getting these lawmakers to agree to a common policy strategy is difficult enough, let alone getting the rest of the House to go along. There are a number of ways information and communications can be used to build a consensus. The most common method is to create a cooperative environment.

Creating a Cooperative Environment

With different groups having different agendas, rural policy can become a political football. Information can de-emphasize the political aspect of the debate by identifying areas of cooperation. Rural needs and problems are often exactly the same as those of highly urbanized areas. Many rural Pennsylvania counties, for example, suffer the same crime rates, illiteracy, teenage-pregnancies per capita as does the city of Philadelphia on a per capita basis. The only difference is that urban issues tend to be more obvious because of their visibility. Information can be used to point out the similarities between urban and rural areas. By stressing the similarities rather than the differences, cooperation can be achieved.

Cooperation can also be encouraged by using information to support common ideas or objectives. While some groups are naturally antagonistic, they may share common values or goals. Republicans and Democrats disagree on many issues. However, they do agree on some things like, increasing federal aid, expanding employment opportunities, and providing good education. These areas of cooperation usually involve outside resources or programs that cost little or nothing. Providing information on these "win-win" situations can be extremely useful in building cooperation.

Information does not always guarantee that the best policy will be selected. Selecting a policy involves persuasion, influence, and compromise. Information, however, can take the edge off and make selection a cooperative effort. By using such methods, far more can be accomplished.

MAKING INFORMATION MORE USEFUL

To conclude my remarks, I would like to leave with you some tips on making information more valuable to policymakers. There are a number of ways to increase the value of information. From my experience, most of them emphasize the way the information is communicated, rather than the information itself. Therefore, when presenting information to policymakers, there are three rules I follow:

Individualizing Information

Each day, legislators receive mountains of reports, studies, and updates. The likelihood that any of it is read is directly proportional to size of the document and to whether or not the policymaker is familiar with you or your organization. By individualizing information, your chances increase that the report will at least get skimmed. Individualizing information requires preparation. It requires knowing who the policymaker's constituents are and what are his or her interests.

Most legislators have two types of constituencies. The first and most important are the district voters. Locating these constituents only requires a legislative map. A comparison between district voters and statewide or national trends is usually enough to grab the attention of most legislators. The second type of constituent can be a little more difficult to pinpoint. It is composed of agencies, organizations, and citizens who are stakeholders in issues the policymaker is interested in. For example, in the area of telecommunications, some of the constituents would include the telephone companies, state regulatory agencies, tele-link businesses, telephone customers, etc. There are a number of ways to identify these secondary constituents. The easiest is to look at the committee assignments. Normally, policymakers are assigned to committees that focus on their interest. Another way is to examine the type of legislation he or she introduces and whom it will affect. However, the best way to identify a policymaker's interest is a face-to-face meeting. The purpose of individualizing information is to ensure the material you are presenting is relevant to the policymaker.

Keep It Simple

One of the truisms of government is that thick reports go unread. Rarely does size or weight of the information matter. What does matter is whether or not the facts or ideas can be easily understood and used to address policy issues. Consequently, information should be presented to policymakers in an eye-catching, easy-to-read format.

Desktop publishing has made information presentation easy and fun. With dozens of graphic programs available, small agencies like the Rural Center have been able to increase their outreach and visibility. It has also enabled us to quickly individualize letters and reports with data about a member's district. While computers can enhance any document, there are a number of rules to follow: first, make graphs as simple as possible. Also make sure all variables are labeled. Second, make sure the text is easy-to-read. Ideally, it should be on an eighth-grade reading level. Third, always enclose an executive summary page that highlights the main point. And fourth, don't overload the reader with data. Attaching column after column of numbers will do little to enhance your argument if no one reads it. In short, when providing data to policymakers remember that, "simple is best." Although you might feel like you are providing sound bites, the policymaker can always call you for more information.

Make Information Accessible

One of the best ways to make the information you collected valuable is to make it accessible. Access is important for giving policymakers and others the information necessary to make informed decisions. There are a number of ways to make information accessible. At the high-tech end, there are electronic bulletin boards where data and other information can be accessed and downloaded through a computer modem. A low-cost approach is to encourage policymakers to call for information. At the Rural Center, most of the information requests are taken over the telephone. This personal contact enables us to better identify the types of information they need. Also, if the information is unavailable, the request allows us to explain why and to determine whether a research project is required.

Information access is a two-way street. In addition to policymakers coming to you for information, you can go to them. Information can be used to push policymakers to take up issues deemed important for rural areas. Similarly, the same information can be used to inform others outside of government concerning issues facing rural residents. The Rural Center has worked closely with outside groups to inform them on rural issues and to help identify new opportunities. When taking information to policymakers or others, care is needed to maintain organizational legitimacy. In a partisan political environment, it is may be necessary to say no.

CONCLUSION

Despite what the newspapers say, policy-making is not all political. Information does play a vital role in identifying needs and goals. It is also necessary for analyzing solutions and outlining consequences. Finally, information is needed to build consensus. Information used in policy-making comes from many sources. Some of the more notable include legislative committees and agencies, executive agencies, local officials, academics, and nongovernment organizations. The information they provide, however, is not without its shortcomings. A few of these shortcomings include availability, time constraints, and other methodological considerations.

From a rural perspective, information has a dual role. First, it is used to inform policymakers rural residents have many unmet needs. Second, it is used to identify new opportunities to build a better rural future. While information has it limits, it is the most useful tool available. Indeed, as Don Dillman pointed out, "throughout this century, information has been used to encourage the substitution of energy and natural resources for labor. Now information is being substituted for all three."[3]

ENDNOTES

[1]Council of State Governments. *State Legislative Leadership, Committees, and Staff 1991-92* Lexington, KY: The Council of State Governments. 1991.

[2]U.S. Census Bureau. *1990 Census Catalog and Guide.* Washington, D.C.: GPO. 1990.

[3]Dillman, Don; Beck, Donald. "Information Technologies and Rural Development in the 1990s." *Councils of State Governments*. Vol. 61 No. 1 Jan./Feb. 1988. p. 31.

Jonathan Johnson is a policy analyst at the Center for Rural Pennsylvania in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

How RIC Provides Answers for Rural America

by

Patricia John

Two USDA agencies, the National Agricultural Library and the Extension Service, originally established the Rural Information Center (RIC) in the fall of 1987 as a joint project, a project which expanded in 1988 to a Federal-State partnership to include the nationwide Cooperative Extension Service network.

RIC continues to coordinate with USDA and other Federal agencies with rural development programs to expand the program at the Federal level. Since 1990 RIC has become a focal point for Federal cooperation and program expansion as a result of mandates from President Bush and the White House Economic Policy Council Working Group on Rural Development and from the Congress. The involvement of USDA and other Federal agencies backed up and reinforced those mandates.

President Bush's rural economic development initiative recommended providing a center to give technical assistance and detailed information on Federal programs that service rural communities. This initiative was to take the form of an expansion of RIC and the participation of all relevant Federal agencies. A key RIC function was to provide toll-free access through an 800 telephone number.

In addition, the cabinet-level White House Economic Policy Council Working Group on Rural Development, chaired by then Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter, in its January 1990 report, *Rural Economic Development for the '90s: A Presidential Initiative*, recommended that the Federal government strengthen RIC resources and capabilities.

In April 1990, shortly after this report was released, Secretary Yeutter invited the White House Economic Policy Council Working Group on Rural

Development, which includes representatives of a dozen executive branch departments and major agencies, to visit RIC for an overview. The working group spent a morning at NAL learning about RIC's information resources and discussing cooperative Federal efforts.

Congress greatly expanded RIC's responsibility level to that of a national rural information center clearinghouse in the 1990 Farm Bill. That legislation required that RIC provide information about rural programs and services offered by Federal, state, and local agencies, as well as about offerings of non-profit organizations and institutions. Such rural services would include assistance programs for job training, education, health care, economic development assistance, and emotional and financial counseling. Congress provided in the legislation an annual authorization of $500,000 for five years (fiscal years 1990—1994) for RIC to establish access to a comprehensive database of rural assistance programs from all levels of the public and private sector.

Congress also provided one additional substantial requirement for RIC, though it did not provide funding authorization. It directed that RIC, in cooperation with the extension service in each state, was to develop, maintain, and provide to each community, and make accessible to any other interested parties, a leadership training catalog. Congress also directed that RIC was to have the responsibility of disseminating information it "possesses" on rural health and safety as part of the rural health and safety education grant programs in the states, and that USDA's Rural Electrification Administration's technical assistance unit was to make use of RIC resources.

RIC enjoys great support from the USDA Office of the Under Secretary for Small Community and Rural Development. The Under Secretary's office has long promoted the idea of Federal agency cooperative staffing and financing as a means to expand RIC's resources and information delivery capabilities. In fact, last year former Secretary Bergland, then Secretary Yeutter, Under Secretary Vautour, and Assistant Under Secretary Hill visited RIC to learn more about the center's capabilities, successes, and cooperative agency efforts.

At the direction of President Bush's rural development initiative, the USDA, under the guidance of the Chair of the White House Economic Policy Council Working Group on Rural Development, Secretary of Agriculture

Edward Madigan, and other Federal agencies with rural programs, are continuing to assist RIC's expansion through a variety of cooperative efforts.

RIC ESTABLISHES RURAL HEALTH INFORMATION SERVICE

A Federal cooperative effort which greatly strengthened RIC's capabilities is a joint effort between USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The idea germinated in September 1989 and was underway within six months.

Congress mandated in the 1987 Social Security Act that the DHHS Office of Rural Health Policy (ORHP) establish a national rural health information clearinghouse service to collect and disseminate rural health care information, research findings, and innovative health care delivery techniques to rural areas.

The ORHP staff has used RIC since it expanded nationally in 1988. The ORHP Director, Jeffrey Human, liked the RIC information service model and in September 1989 he approached RIC with the proposal of incorporating the DHHS rural health center clearinghouse mandate with RIC. The joint effort would prevent duplicating rural Federal efforts. ORHP would also be able to utilize the Cooperative Extension Service's nation-wide network to disseminate rural health information to local communities and locate the health information clearinghouse at a national library.

NAL and DHHS signed a three-year interagency agreement in February 1990 in which NAL agreed to establish a rural health information service by October 1990. The service would function as a specialized subject component of RIC. This agreement combined two congressionally mandated clearinghouses while fully supporting the cooperative approach recommended in President Bush's rural development initiative. The health component is known as the Rural Information Center Health Service, or RICHS.

As part of the agreement with ORHP RIC acquired an 800 telephone number in order to provide easy access for rural officials, communities, organizations, and individuals seeking rural health and economic development information. Under this interagency agreement DHHS will transfer nearly a million dollars to RIC to implement and operate RICHS during fiscal

years 1991 and 1992. NAL agreed to give RIC a new staff position and RIC was able to hire a health librarian in September 1990 who serves as the RICHS team leader.

In October 1990 NAL announced RICHS' implementation. However, the unprecedented delay of approval of the fiscal year 1991 Federal budget, which nearly shut down the Federal government, subsequently delayed the transferring of DHHS funds until the end of January 1991 and the hiring of two additional health information specialists until April. Unfortunately RIC staff members were in the unpleasant position of operating an 800 number with a workload increase in excess of 100% for six months without the anticipated additional RICHS staff. RIC has now recovered from the increased request load and plans to further expand the health information services in 1991.

In order to complete the staffing of the RICHS operation RIC initiated a cooperative agreement with the University of Maryland's Cooperative Extension Service (CES). Maryland's CES readily agreed to support the RIC program by entering into this agreement because RIC was a joint extension service project. The agreement allowed RIC to hire two health information specialists, members of the University's extension facility, and a secretary, a Maryland state employee. The RICHS operation has been not only an example of successful Federal interagency cooperation effort but Federal-State partnership as well.

There is an additional Federal cooperative twist to the RICHS project. Being able to take advantage of the Federal extension service partnership, Myron Johnsrud, the USDA Extension Service Administrator, obtained approval from the Secretary of Agriculture for the Extension Service to recruit a state extension service rural health specialist on a twelve-month Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) appointment. RIC funds the appointment which allows the USDA Extension Service to recruit annually a Cooperative Extension Service specialist to assist the RICHS staff's network and information delivery capabilities. The Extension Service is announcing the position nation-wide; once it makes a selection it will sign an agreement with the university of the successful candidate. RIC is to fund living expenses and partial salary; the state extension service is to fund the remaining salary; and the Federal extension service is to provide RIC with the IPA position. This example

is about as creative a recruitment partnership one is likely to find in the Federal government.

Although RIC has concentrated its efforts over the past year to greatly expand its capabilities to respond to rural health requests, it has been processing questions about rural health care access and delivery systems, health care personnel recruitment and retention, and hospital closures since its implementation in 1987.

The crisis of health care access and delivery in many rural areas is an economic issue as well as a health care issue. According to a 1988 U.S. Senate staff report to the Special Committee on Aging on the health care challenge:

> "The rural hospital often plays a pivotal role in the life of the community. It is not only the heart of the local health care delivery system, but is also a source of civic pride and a key player in the community's efforts to attract and retain physicians and other health care personnel... The fact that the presence of a hospital virtually guarantees a steady flow of funds into a rural community (such as public and private insurance payments) cannot be underestimated. These funds have a substantial direct and indirect impact on local employment and business prosperity since the hospital is generally the largest or second largest employer as well as a major purchaser of goods. Moreover, the community's prospects for future economic development — attracting and retaining employers — are often inextricably linked with the maintenance of a viable health care delivery system."[1]

Consequently, if a rural community cannot recruit and retain doctors or maintain an economy strong enough to keep its hospital or clinic open the community loses not only immediate health care access for its residents but also one of the largest community employers and future business expansion opportunities. One of every ten rural hospitals closed during each year in the 1980s and currently twenty-four percent (600 of 2,500) rural hospitals are estimated to be at risk of closure in the next few years.[2]

Ironically, while many rural hospitals are facing bankruptcy:

> Nationwide, over the past year the health-services industries have been the only major sector of the national economy to grow. In the face of recession, health-care employers

> added 383,000 jobs between July 1990 and July 1991, according to the U.S. Labor Department. That's an increase of 4.9%, while the overall number of jobs in the private sector dwindled 1.3%. More than 9% of all private, nonagricultural workers in the U.S. are now employed in the health-delivery services, up from 3% in 1960.[3]

Although this recent health-care service industry growth has helped to stabilize some depressed urban economies, many rural hospitals must rethink how they will provide future health care more efficiently to insure survival. The RIC health service is trying to provide the best information available to assist hospital planners and administrators, whether they are searching for information on more innovative health care delivery systems, on examples of successful strategies and partnerships, or on potential funding sources.

RIC NETWORKS WITH RURAL HEALTH GROUPS

In order to provide the best available health information for this new audience the RIC staff networks with several significant groups including the Office of Rural Health Policy, the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health, the Rural Health Research Centers, the National Rural Health Association, the state offices of rural health, and the National Library of Medicine. The Department of Health and Human Service's Office of Rural Health Policy (ORHP), since its establishment in 1987, has had as its major responsibility working with other Federal agencies, states, national organizations, foundations, and private sector organizations to seek solutions to health care issues and problems in rural communities.

At the Federal program and policy level the ORHP provides staffing assistance to the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and advises the DHHS Secretary Louis Sullivan, Congress, and other Federal agencies on the status of national rural health issues.

In addition to funding RICHS, ORHP administers rural health grant programs for the seven new Rural Health Research Centers and thirty-eight state offices of rural health. ORHP also provides rural health outreach grants and financial support to the National Rural Health Association for the production of publications, including the *Journal of Rural Health*.

The National Advisory Committee on Rural Health's function is to advise Secretary Sullivan on priorities and strategies to consider in addressing problems in providing and financing health care services in rural areas. The committee includes representatives of health insurance companies, private foundations, local and Federal governments, educational institutions, and the health care industry.

The committee is divided into three working groups:

— The Health Care Financing Work Group addresses the impact of Federal payment policies on access and availability of health care services in rural areas.

— The Health Services Delivery Work Group addresses such problems as the changing role of rural hospitals, inadequate emergency medical services, agricultural health and safety issues, and improving program coordination.

— The Health Personnel Work Group addresses problems associated with the training, recruitment, and retention of health care personnel.

The ORHP administers grants supporting seven rural health research centers at an annual funding level of nearly two million dollars. The centers conduct applied research in rural health issues. The specialized policy interests of the seven centers reflect the diversity of rural America. Some of these interest areas include agricultural health and safety; rural impact of medicare provider and physician payment policies; health care access for low income and dependent populations, including children, the elderly, the unemployed, the uninsured, the mentally ill, and the disabled; recruitment and retention of health care professionals; rural emergency medical services; health care services for rural minorities of the southeast and Hispanic-Americans and Native Americans of the southwest; quality and outcome of rural health care; and rural hospitals and personnel issues.

The National Rural Health Association is a national, non-profit membership organization whose primary goal is to improve the health and health care of rural Americans. Its diverse membership of more than 1,600 includes administrators, health care practitioners, planners, researchers, policy makers,

hospitals, community and migrant health centers, state health departments, and university programs.

There are currently thirty-eight state offices of rural health. The ORHP provides partial funding for the state offices which serve as the primary link to the states for dissemination of rural health care information.

RIC also networks with the National Library of Medicine (NLM) and NLM's national network of libraries of medicine. This network consists of eight regional medical libraries, 136 resource libraries, and approximately 3,300 local health science libraries. RIC focuses on providing information on rural health care issues and problems not on clinical medicine requests. RIC does not collect clinical information or operate as a consumer health hot line. RIC refers users requesting this type of information to an appropriate source such as NLM, an NLM regional medical library, or a specialized health information center.

RIC processes a broad spectrum of rural health requests, including questions on funding sources for health programs, services, equipment and capital expenditures; state initiatives concerning rural health care issues; uninsured or underinsured rural populations; closure, restructuring, and diversification of rural hospitals and clinics; agricultural health and safety; maternal and child health issues; innovative approaches to the delivery of health care services; and, distribution, training, recruitment, and retention of health professionals.

RIC's networking efforts with the new rural health groups has greatly enhanced the Center's access to and delivery of health care information nationwide. RIC is also obtaining pertinent health care and research publications from all the rural health groups and systematically adding them to the NAL collection and NAL's database, AGRICOLA.

RURAL INFORMATION REQUESTS

RIC was filling requests on rural health issues before the joint USDA-DHHS agreement to implement the health service at RIC, as previously noted, and, significantly, RIC's most successful known funding information request

assisted a frontier hospital. This occurred in 1988 before the RICHS concept existed.

A New Mexico county extension agent discovered through first hand experience that the 36-year old x-ray machine at De Baca General Hospital did not produce legible x-rays. Seeking funding assistance for the Fort Sumner frontier hospital, he called New Mexico's RIC State Coordinator who put him in touch with RIC. RIC supplied him with information about grant-seeking strategies and application procedures and identified a Federal grant program for which the hospital potentially could qualify. The county agent used these resources for the text and justification of a grant request to the New Mexico state legislature which approved a $260,000 hospital grant to De Baca General in 1989. Simultaneously the agent pursued the Federal grant. Five months after approval of the state legislature grant the Federal agency approved an additional $215,000 grant to De Baca General. With these two grants the hospital purchased a variety of hospital equipment, including some for intensive care and surgery. Some of the replaced equipment was more than 40 years old. The funds allowed De Baca General staff to update their medical facilities and provide improved health care to an isolated rural community located over 150 miles from the nearest urban hospital.

RIC's implementation of the health information service has had a significant impact on the recent change in RIC's requests and audience affiliation. Between fiscal years 1988 and 1989 sixty percent of RIC requests dealt with economic development and revitalization issues. In fiscal year 1990 forty-one percent of the requests dealt with the quality of rural life and with concerns about environmental conditions, air and water pollution, and the preservation of natural resources. Requests on economic development issues were a close second at forty percent. The breakdown of RIC requests since the implementation of the health service in fiscal year 1991 has been:

Health services	36%
Economic development	34%
Quality of life/natural resources	20%
Local government services	8%
Leadership	2%

In fiscal year 1991 twenty-four percent of RIC requests, cutting across all subject areas, was for funding information.

Likewise, RIC users remained fairly constant between fiscal years 1988 and 1990, with between fifty and sixty percent of all requests coming from the county, state, or Federal extension staffs. In fiscal year 1989 RIC experienced a significant increase in requests from individuals — from four to eleven percent — and has since held at about eleven percent. In fiscal year 1990 RIC experienced an increase in requests from local officials — up from zero percent to six percent — and is holding at that level. Since the implementation of the health service this past October RIC has experienced a fifteen percent increase in requests from health care professionals and organizations.

RIC PLANS FUTURE FEDERAL COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

Now that RIC has the health service staffed and operational it will focus its attention next year on strengthening the access and delivery of rural information by the continuing promotion of cooperative efforts with both USDA and other Federal agencies.

The USDA Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) just approved the transfer of a funded position for RIC to hire a rural information specialist. NAL and FmHA are currently working on the administrative details and expect to transfer the slot shortly. In addition, the USDA Forest Service is exploring ways to fund a new position at RIC in fiscal year 1992.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) and their national SCORE (Senior Corps of Retired Executives) organization participated with RIC last year in a small business information pilot study in which SCORE and RIC identified user information needs as a result of the pilot and assembled an information packet of SBA and RIC materials for RIC to distribute to users seeking general small business and/or funding information.

RIC is currently working with SBA and the USDA Extension Service in another cooperative effort in rural information. Last year Congress passed legislation mandating that all three organizations — SBA, Extension, and RIC — provide rural program and development assistance information to rural

citizens. However, to date Congress has not approved any additional funding to implement the mandate. As an initial step, RIC plans to expand rural information access, especially economic and health, on the RIC sub-board of NAL's electronic bulletin board, named ALF. RIC plans to load the yet unpublished 1991 edition of SBA's *Working Together: A Guide to Federal and State Resources for Rural Economic Development*. SBA recently provided RIC with the electronic file to load on ALF. RIC will set up an information resource file for each state on the electronic bulletin board. RIC also plans to load full text of all the titles from its *Rural Information Center Publication Series* which includes funding resource directories, Federal funding sources for local governments, publications on tourism, health, affordable housing, and historic preservation, to list a few.

In addition to RIC's plans to expand electronic access to rural information on ALF this fall, the RIC health service staff added nine bulletins to the RIC sub-board this summer. The bulletins include information on Federal and private rural health grants; rural health publications; national, regional, and state rural health conferences; and the Rural Health Research Center's activity reports and publications.

RIC is fortunate in that it came into existence as a high-level USDA initiative and Congressional mandate to meet rural information needs. RIC receives support from President Bush's rural economic development initiative and the White House Economic Policy Council Working Group on Rural Development, Congress, Secretary Madigan, Under Secretary Vautour, and Assistant Secretary Hill. Top level USDA officials view the success of RIC as an essential link in the USDA rural development program.

In spite of RIC's brief existence of less than three years on the national scene, it has been involved in several highly visible USDA and Federal rural development planning activities. RIC hopes that this visibility and participation in both department and interdepartmental-level Federal rural development planning initiatives will continue and that RIC activities will continue to impact favorably Federal rural programs.

ENDNOTES

[1] Melcher, John, Chairman. *The Rural Health Care Challenge*, a Staff Report to the Special Committee on Aging, United States Senate. October 24, 1988, pp. 1-2.

[2] M. E. Swink and S. N. Cacic, "Planning and Development of Rural Hospital Care: Past, Present, and Future," in *Rural Planning and Development: Visions of the 21st Century*. Proceedings of the Conference, 13-15 February, 1991, Orlando, Florida. (Gainsville: University of Florida, 1991), Vol. II, p. 585.

[3] Hilary Stout. "Economic Tradeoff — Soaring Health Costs Have a Silver Lining: A Host of New Jobs." *The Wall Street Journal*. September 6, 1991. p. 1.

Patricia John is Coordinator for the Rural Information center, National Agricultural Library in Beltsville, Maryland.

IS RENEWED LEADERSHIP THE ANSWER?

by

Jim Killacky

Speech Reprint

Thank you, Daryl Heasley, for that kind introduction. I am delighted to be here with you this morning, and not to be like Christopher Columbus on one of his returns to Spain a few decades ago. It is reported that when Columbus got back to Spain he reflected on his journey and he realized the following: that when he set out he did not know where he was going; when he got there he did not know where he was; when he got home he did not know where he was; when he got home he did not know where he had been; and, he did it all on borrowed money.

I was also delighted a few months ago when I saw the title that Bernard Vavrek had selected for this talk. I was ill when the final brochure details were being addressed and Bernard, with his infinite wisdom, came up with the wonderful title, "Is Renewed Leadership the Answer?" My first thought when I saw it was the answer to what? or to whom?

As I reflected on the "to what?" I thought of a CHANGING RURAL AMERICA. A Rural America:

- that is geographically isolated though technologically connected (or at least connectable) with the rest of the world;
- that recognizes in some quarters its need for looking beyond the county line, although being "from away" is still close to criminal activity in many areas;
- that is beset with a huge litany of economic, social and cultural issues:

  — drug and alcohol abuse

— spouse and child abuse
— increasing dropout rates
— "drop-in" rates also increasing (drop-in refers to young people go to school because there is nothing else to do and whose "presence" is marginal in class activities)
— public schools unable to meet diverse constituent needs
— severe economic issues
— growth which causes major taxation changes and makes life difficult for locals who are poor or on fixed incomes
— apathy and lack of involvement

- that has fabulously underutilized the community resource represented by women, children, and older persons.

We live in a Rural America that is part of a changing world, a Rural America that is characterized by:

- Increasing complexity
- Globalism
- A part of a worldwide economy for which it is not prepared
- A part of a world culture.

Statements like these are not often comforting and yet my reading suggests that they are true. Our view of the world will play a large part in determining how well we cope with these changes. For example, in workshop settings on leadership, I often ask participants this question:

WHEN YOU THINK OF YOURSELF IS IT AS A CITIZEN OF:

Your hometown
Your county
Your state
The USA
North America
Another country
The world

Often, in a spirit of globalism, people will say, "Of course I am a citizen of the world." At which point, I say – at least in this region where most people are white – that by saying that you are a citizen of the world you recognize that you are in a minority, as the majority of the world is populated by people of color. That is often a sobering realization for workshop members, especially as it hastens the real need for dealing with diversity.

So it might, as I reflected in preparing this talk, be fairly safe to assume that all is not well and good in rural America. I asked myself what kind of leadership has been in place to get us, for the most part, to where we are today.

And for the most part, my answer is that we have experienced what is known to many as Transactional Leadership. This is characterized by being white male dominated, top-down, hierarchical, reactionary, non-inclusive, with limited vision, perpetuating the status quo and not given to change other than that which is in the exclusive interests of the leaders.

And before getting to an answer for the question title of this talk, there is another implicit question needing to be answered and that is – what is renewed leadership. For mu purposes renewed leadership is akin to what contemporary literature refers to as transformational leadership.

Transformational leaders have several qualities and skills which I will briefly touch upon.

QUALITIES AND SKILLS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS

A transformational leader possesses these qualities:

1. Is committed to a cause and is passionate about it;
2. Makes time to think, plan, and read;
3. Is a visionary;
4. Possesses a record of success;
5. Is innovative and willing to try new approaches;
6. Is a proactive doer rather than a reactive naysayer;
7. Has few sacred cows – and yet handles tradition with elegance;
8. Appreciates and embraces the beauty of differences;

9. Has little fear of the unknown;
10. Welcomes change as a necessary dynamic;
11. Is a risk-taker;
12. Is a person of caring and integrity;
13. Is open and not a "game-player."

The transformational leader brings these skills:

1. Is able to manage money – both procurement and budgeting;
2. Is skilled in teambuilding;
3. Can relate well to multiple stakeholders and broaden political and power bases;
4. Motivates and inspires;
5. Encourages and appreciates differences;
6. Knows how and with whom to plan;
7. Assesses feelings pro and con – addresses them and moves on;
8. Knows one's own style and limitations;
9. Rewards and recognizes others;
10. Handles transitions effectively – deals with endings before beginnings;
11. Handles conflicts and differences competently and fairly;
12. Is able to openly give and receive feedback;
13. Expects failures in others and self occasionally;
14. Can make decisions when necessary – in ways that are timely, clear, and decisive.

And now to return to the question: Is Renewed Leadership the Answer? I hope it is. However, our application of these qualities and skills will give us a much better answer in the years ahead. I am persuaded that these qualities and skills do provide the means that will result in not only a Rural America, but a world that is more peaceful, environmentally, economically and culturally viable than is presently the case.

At the University of Maine Cooperative Extension where I do my work, we have a number of leadership efforts underway in which the qualities and skills of transformational leadership form the basis of our curriculum offerings. These efforts include the Family Community Leadership Program (FCL), the

Young Farmer Leadership Institute, the Maine Kellogg Community Education Leadership Project – all of which offer a range of workshops in community leadership. We put equal if not more emphasis on follow-up activities to these trainings. It is simply not enough anymore to mount an interesting, stimulating and enjoyable program for a day, weekend, or week and then never have the participants hear from you again. The program in leadership training is but one event on a long journey and we must prepare for the program as well as the rest of the journey.

I will close with a brief recognition of the fact that transformational leadership as an answer to the needs of Rural America will not be a panacea. There will be resistance – especially on the part of persons or groups whose long standing vested interests will inevitably be challenged. There will be fear and anxiety on the parts of those not "in power" for the reactions and retributions that engaging in transformational behaviors may bring on. There will be a great need for extensive training – and for recognizing that the changes may be a long time in coming for what has to be changed is very well entrenched. However, when we look at the state of Rural America (and other parts of this country and the world) – with its environmental ecology on the verge of irreversible collapse, and with its people crying out for greater human interaction and understanding – then by revising our question to read SHOULD RENEWED LEADERSHIP QUALITIES AND SKILLS BE APPLIED TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF RURAL AMERICA?, I submit the answer is a resounding YES.

Jim Killacky is Community Development Specialist at the Cooperative Extension System, University of Maine in Orono, Maine.

THE USE OF STATE INFORMATION RESOURCES

by

Howard F. McGinn

Speech Reprint

I'd like to begin by recalling the War of 1812. This was a war that should never have occurred. There were reasons, of course, for the antagonism between Great Britain and the United States. The British had been conscripting American sailors into the Royal Navy and in an attempt to limit American Trade with France and Continental Europe, Parliament had enacted the Orders-in Council decree that permitted the Royal Navy to blockade the American coast and stop American ships from trading with the Continent. The Americans, for their part, relished the chance to invade Canada and perhaps add that part of the Empire to the United States. But as I said, this war should not have occurred. On June 18, 1812, Congress declared war on Great Britain. What Congrss did not know, however, was that the British had just suffered through a terrible winter and on July 16, 1812, two days before the United States declared war, Parliament had rescinded the Orders-in-Council decree. Today this war would not have occurred because the news of the action of Parliament would have been reported live on CNN and War would probably have been averted. In 1812, it took at least one month for the information to cross the Atlantic. The irony of this war, of course, is that its greatest battle, the Battle of New Orleans, occurred two weeks after a peace treaty between the two nations had been signed in Ghent, Belgium. News of the signing of the treaty took seven weeks to reach the United States but by then the battle had occurred and over 2,000 British soldiers perished.

In today's world of rapid communication where world events are televised live such a series of occurrences would be unthinkable, yet while our states, cities, counties, and their businesses and citizens have come to accept the fact that CNN or ABC or CBS will instantly transmit information about world events

as they happen, these same states and citizens are not aware of, are unable to understand, or have not accepted the omnipresence of instantaneous availability to information that could affect their lives in a much more direct manner than the televised events in Moscow, Baghdad, or Peking.

For the past five years the state of North Carolina has been constructing a statewide system called the North Carolina Information Network whose sole function is to deliver electronic information for consumption by all sectors of the community into every town and county in the state whether that town is high in the Smokey Mountains or on the Outer Banks. Most of this information, however, has been developed for the business community. My comments today are based on the State Library's ongoing experience in constructing this information infrastructure, this information network. I will try to give equal time to our failures and problems as well as our successes. My comments will be divided into these main topic areas: 1. data communications; 2. product development; and 3. marketing/education. First, though, I think some general comments about the development and operation of this type of program are necessary.

State information resources must be viewed as investments made by taxpayers in information assets. Because information is able to be stored and delivered in multiple ways, the term "information assets" should include traditional methods of information storage and delivery such as books, periodicals, and film as well as the constantly developing world of electronic media — information stored on videotape, compact discs, hard discs, floppy discs, CD-ROM databases, magnetic tape and so forth. Secondly, information assets should include any type of information delivery system operated by the state. These systems would range from standard vehicle-based courier service to interactive television networks to high speed data telecommunications. The term should especially be understood to include the educational institutions at all levels supported by state funding. This all-inclusive approach is necessary because in order to effectively bring a state and its communities, particularly rural communities, modern electronic information services, the use of all of these components needs to be choreographed so that citizens receive their proper return on the investment made in information assets. This approach demands that state agencies change their perception of information asset

ownership and access. Information resources purchased by any department of the University of North Carolina or Central Carolina Community College or Lee County Senior High School or the State Library are as eligible for use by the public as those investments made by public libraries.

Thirdly, the North Carolina Information Network (hereafter called the Network) was developed within the cultural, economic, political and educational framework of the state to meet specific needs in North Carolina. What worked in North Carolina may fail in Maine or New Hampshire and, conversely, what failed in our state may work in your state. This is simply a reaffirmation of the old marketing axiom that postulates that products and services are developed to meet the needs of specific market segments whose characteristics are similar and are understood. This network was constructed with relatively little new investment of federal, state or local tax dollars. In most states the investment in the assets of an electronic information network is being made on a daily basis.

Finally, unlike the communications problems of the War of 1812, the difficulty the State Library of North Carolina has experienced is not delivering vital information in a timely manner. It is able to deliver massive amounts of information to any location in the state as quickly as affordable modern technology allows. The problem, rather, is how to use the information once it is sent to the town. I will return to this problem later. Let me move on then to the first of the topics mentioned above — data communications.

DATA COMMUNICATIONS

Since the beginning of the construction of the Network, access to quality, reliable telecommunications for the transmission of data have been the primary developmental concern. Access to data networks is especially crucial in states that are predominantly rural and though North Carolina is the tenth largest state in the country when ranked by population it is predominantly a rural state with few large cities. The state moreover, has a large land mass for an eastern state and it possesses significant geographical barriers like the 7,000 foot mountains and the remote barrier islands. It possesses too, that bain of all telecommunications, many local "Ma and Pa" telephone companies.

Because the network's first product offerings were the interlibrary loan services offered by the Online Computer Library Center, commonly called OCLC, headquartered in Dublin, Ohio, and homegrown electronic bulletin boards, reliable, access to reliable telecommunications systems was essential, especially in rural areas, if local communities were to buy into the Network. Access to OCLC was not a serious problem since it did provide service to its computer through Compuserve and a non-toll free 800 line. The bulletin boards were another matter. The original plan had been to mount the boards on the University of North Carolina Educational Computing Service's electronic mail/bulletin board system in the Research Triangle Park. In 1986 it was decided that this would not work because the command structure needed to be learned to use the University's program at that time was not user friendly, and access to the system from distant areas demanded much data switching in the local "Ma and Pa" telephone companies. The State Library, as a result, chose the Western Union Easylink system (now owned by A.T. & T.) as the distributer of the bulletin boards and electronic mail service. Western Union was easy to use and, most importantly, offered access in all parts of the state to reliable telecommunications.

In the past five years, the situation has changed considerably. The heavy use of both OCLC and the bulletin boards and the rapid increase of information products offered by the Network demanded that the State Library find a more economical delivery system. The choice was easy — the University of North Carolina Educational Computing Service and its data telecommunications system called LINCNET. The University had been rapidly building capacity and expanding access to LINCNET over the five year period. In fact the State Library had aided the expansion through LSCA Title III grants for the purchase of equipment for the system backbone. By 1990, LINCNET had established nodes on its X.25, packet network in over 80 institutions (including the State Library), and provided a linkage to BITNET and INTERNET to these institutions, most of which were in rural areas. The State Library then, through a contractual arrangement with the University, began to fund hardware installations at selected node sites across the state. This local node enhancement now allowed local libraries to dial a local telephone number to access the LINCNET system.

By the end of 1992, it is anticipated that 90% of the state will have access to the LINCNET system. This access is especially important since LINCNET will be the statewide component of the National Research Educational Network (NREN). I'd like to emphasize an important point made earlier — the State Library achieved this rapid expansion of access to quality, reliable high speed data communications because of cooperation. There was no way it could have constructed its own LINCNET. The signing of an interagency contract with the University of North Carolina General Administration opened up new sources of customers and funding to the University while it brought service to rural areas. Both institutions have benefited. The relationship also has very positive political implications. But what happened to those bulletin boards on Western Union? Let me move on to topic two — Product Development.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The omnipresence of personal computers in state government offices has permanently affected the ways state governments create, manage, and distribute public information. As you are well aware, most states are attempting to develop policies to control this wealth of electronic data and assure that public information is not deliberately erased, altered or hidden. The personal computer, however, has created many opportunities for the public to gain access to the valuable information it purchases through the work of state employees. When the State Library's Network began operations, it faced the same problems the fledgling radio and television networks of the 1920s and 1940s faced — lack of programming. The Network was able to distribute information. The problem was gaining information to distribute. Some of the early bulletin boards created and distributed by the Network now seem primitive, even comical. Bulletin boards were created and distributed just to fill air time but some filled a need. The Network's growth began when the State Library developed a program with the state's Office of Purchase and Contract. The program, the North Carolina Automated Purchase Directory, is a series of bulletin boards that lists all contracts for all goods and services being put out for bid by state government, all highway construction contracts, and contracts for the renovation and/or construction of all state owned buildings. For the first time, people in all parts of the state, not just those living near Raleigh, are

able to see what the state is buying and bid on the contracts. Under the old system, information about just 50% of the contracts was able to be obtained because a person had to subscribe to a printed listing service. Under the new electronic system, almost 100% of the contracts are listed and updated twice a week. Business people can obtain the information at their local public library, community college, or academic library. Corporate libraries have direct access. Because of port capacity the Network has not been able to allow direct access by consumers. Usage patterns show that the main users and beneficiaries are entrepreneurs, small paving contractors and small construction companies.

The success of this program prompted the state's Secretary of Administration and The State Personnel Director to ask the State Library to work with them to create electronic listings of state job vacancies. These lists were easily created from the master files maintained by the Office of Personnel and were tested over a six month period in different communities across North Carolina. Because the libraries on the state's large military bases such as Ft. Bragg and Camp Lejeune were included in the test, spouses of military personnel sent to the Persian Gulf last year were able to find employment with the state to help carry their families through the difficult financial period.

Other bulletin boards designed for use by businesses and local governments are provided in conjunction with the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, the North Carolina Biotechnology Center, the League of Municipalities and other agencies and associations. Programs under development include a small business buyer-supplier database, listings of appointees to state government boards and commissions, listings of those in professions licensed by the state who have had their license suspended, the monthly financial reports from the Secretary of Revenue, listings of sites of abandoned gasoline storage tanks and other types of data.

I mentioned before that the bulletin boards are being moved. The Network is in the process of transferring this information to its parent agency's computer. The State Library is a Division of the Department of Cultural Resources. The Department's computer will shortly become an address on INTERNET and will be able to be accessed by institutions around the world. This leads me to new programs.

The State Library will soon enter into an agreement with a mid-western state to test the exchange of state information generated by the two states. North Carolina already participates in an electronic interlibrary loan system designed for small rural libraries with other states in the Southeast. By becoming an INTENET address, the State Library will be able to work with the state's Department of Commerce offices in Europe and Asia in bringing business and investment to the state. The Library's role as the chief provider of statistical, demographic, financial and other types of data to corporations, businesses, and local governments in North Carolina was recently enforced by the signing of an agreement with the State Data Center and the state's Office of Planning. The State Data Center will concentrate on the development of information programs; the State Library and its Network will be responsible for the marketing of these services.

One final new program note. In order for a consumer-oriented network of this type to be effective, it must be opportunistic. This past week I have started discussions with the North Carolina Supercomputer Center staff about the development of a digital library. This library would concentrate, initially, on North Carolina subjects. Because of the power of the supercomputer, a person interested in studying Sen. Sam Ervin would be able to call up the text of the Senator's Watergate Hearing speeches, then watch and listen to the Senator deliver the speeches. For sports fans, the menu would offer Michael Jordan, for jazz fans, John Coultrain, for voyeurs, Jim Bakker and so forth. The computing power of the Cray Computer would also enable students to simulate wetlands environments, waste treatment site construction, re-enactments of the Battle of King's Mountain. Access would be through LINCNET and made available to all of those same small towns.

PROBLEMS

As with any human endeavor, there have been and will be problems. The major difficulties have been, as you might expect, technical, But they are being solved. It has also been difficult to convince some library directors that the electronic information age is here to stay. That convincing is being accomplished by the closing down of some State Library manually provided services and the requirement that all libraries in the state use the Network for certain

services. The bizarre economic conditions that exist on both the state and local levels have caused some disruption. The main problem, however, is education. How does one convince a small town businessperson who has turned an annual profit for twenty years that he or she could use this information? How do you teach new and established businesses to use marketing or financial data that is sometimes raw and requires interpretation? How do you teach information literacy when the educational systems in the state need massive overhauling? While the primary role of the library is to deliver information, librarians have increasingly found themselves serving as teachers of the young and old, as job counselors, as social workers. Yet no funds or public recognition are received for these purposes. More money is spent on the state information resources called education that any other area. Until the educational community is able to clean its own house and provide the citizens a proper return on the investment in education, progress in helping local businesses and governments prosper in the information economy will be hampered. Until the libraries, especially the public libraries in both urban and rural areas, are provided the financial and personnel resources needed to facilitate this transition, local development will be hampered. I speak only of North Carolina. I suspect, however, we are not alone.

There are many other benefits that have been realized by the construction of the Network that could be discussed. But if you were to ask me to pinpoint the major benefits resulting from this program I would list the following: First, the deliverance of the tools needed to function in an information driven economy to rural areas traditionally hampered by geographic barriers; secondly, the increased return to the citizens of the state on the investment made in information assets because of increased cooperation between state agencies; thirdly, increased access to public information. The First Amendment still lives. Finally, the creation of important new roles and responsibilities for the state's libraries, especially public libraries. Perhaps the delivery of these types of services will help them in their perpetual battle for sufficient funding and change the public's erroneous perception of the public library from one of a warm fuzzy place where parents store their children after school to the more truthful image of the library as the community's information center, in a way, its information public utility. I am convinced that governments

that do not support the construction of a library-based infrastructure to help their communities enter the now-arrived information age must someday be ready to answer to their taxpayers why they chose obsolescence over the future. That problem, though, may be moot. That town may no longer exist. Let us all take steps to make sure own rural areas are present to greet the 21st Century.

Howard McGinn is State Librarian at the Division of State Library, in Raleigh, North Carolina.

SCHOOLS SUPPORTING THE RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

by

Sue Raftery

Speech Reprint

It is a pleasure to be here in Portland and the Northeast, particularly at this time of year. I am particularly pleased to share with you some thoughts about "Schools Supporting the Rural Infrastructure."

What I hope to do today is to expand your concept of the role and activities of schools. Move beyond the comfort areas, and challenge the concept "we've always done it this way." For what we are all talking about at this conference is the reshaping of the vision and mission of rural communities.

In thinking about just how to frame my remarks today I considered looking at the expected — Rural America. But I believe to focus just on domestic issues, at least to create the framework of my remarks would be too narrow. Having just re-visited Naisbett's *Megatrends 2000*, and recently looking at the issue of U.S. competitiveness in the world- I believe I would be remiss if my comments were not framed in a "global" economy-and then moving from the global community back to rural community. In America, Naisbett reminds us that we do indeed live in a global community. Our children attending rural schools and our rural constituency compete in the international economy.

Throughout the industrialized nations-education and the economy have become a catch phase for a vague but urgent dissatisfaction with the status quo (OECD, 1990).

In a recent proceeding document published by the Organization of Economic Cooperation & Development it was stated:

> The central problem is the risk that the capacity of a highly interdependent, open and fast-moving international

> economic system to generate change will outstrip human and social capabilities-unless education and training can enhance the capacity of individuals to change and thereby increase their security.

This same report goes on to say:

> The functionally illiterate-those with inadequate educational preparation and access to educational preparation and access to educational opportunities, or those with inappropriate qualifications-risk being marginalized, unemployed or having access to little more than unstable, low-paying jobs.

In reviewing the literature which addresses the problems of rural education and rural community development, there seems to be increasing evidence that rural education policies and programs are inextricably linked to the future development of rural communities, both here and abroad.

Our global economy, and in turn, our domestic economy are changing quickly. The key to maintaining a competitive edge is the ability to understand the local community and its history, while remaining flexible and adaptive. Rural communities must be able to draw the best from their collective past-while looking to the future and where they want to be in the 21st Century.

We have seen a great deal of change in our society, many of which are global in nature: high levels of unemployment long-term unemployment, sharp declines in manufacturer employment, intensified international trade competition, changing skills & qualifications.

For rural communities in the U.S. we have:

- Higher proportion of rural workers that are part-time, self-employed, and/or seasonally employed.
- A higher average of disabled persons (proportionally)
- Higher proportion of persistently poor.
- Much smaller proportion of population ages 20-44; much higher percentage in the 55+ category.
- Smaller number of both college graduates and in the number years of education attainment.

All of these factors influence the economy in rural communities. Such inequities jeopardize the present and future viability of these communities. In order to survive communities need to tap their local resources to maximize its potential. Education agencies are an essential part of the local infrastructure. The OECD report states it best:

> In an open economy, the competitiveness of the workforce is closely connected with its ability to acquire the right kinds of knowledge and skills.

So then how can schools, at all levels, be supportive in their rural communities? It is more complex than most would think. For the past 40 years we have had an industrialized model of schooling. The local schools were an integral part of the community but most of the community viewed the schools as a K-12 enterprise. When we talk about schools and community development it is a broader concept.

First, let us look briefly at a definition of community development.

Ken Wilkinson, (1988), "As a process, CD means capacity building-building (or at least trying to build) the capacity for self-help and self-direction through community action."

Paul Nachtigal (1989), "An educational process through which a community learns to survive."

My definition, "CD is the process communities helping citizenry help themselves for the common good."

Development entails deliberate action and long term commitment. It emphasizes a *process*.

If one accepts the idea that community self-help and collective action are at the heart of community development, then Community Development efforts focus on capacity building.

Schools, education agencies, in this sense are clearly a part of the CD process since they are integral part of community infrastructure. But not as a single entity, schools are part of the basic building blocks of Community Development.

Sense of Community

- Knowledge of local community
- Integration of community into curriculum
- Development of community
- Belonging
- Balance

Quality Of Life

- Health
- Social service delivery
- Civic groups
- Churches
- Volunteerism
- Libraries

Human Resource Development

- K-12
- Higher education
- Technical schools
- Training/Retraining
- Community Education
- Lifelong learning

Economic Development

- Creation of wealth
- Economic diversity
- Job creation

First, let me say that educational reform that provides a quality education, combining practical experience with ideas and concepts for all students is, in and of itself, an important contribution to Community Development.

Benefits:

- Students benefit through increased mobility & higher earnings that come from improved education.
- Communities benefit in that improved schools make them a more attractive place to work and live.
- Communities benefit when better educated individuals remain in the community, their skills and abilities contribute directly to the capacity of the community to deal with common problems. (Raftery and Mulkey, 1989)
- Schools can facilitate the development of the broader community by adding explicit community focus to existing programs.

However, I must raise a caution flag that while the benefits of improved education to both individuals and communities are believed to have a positive correlation merely improving the education delivery in a rural community will not automatically lead to economic development. Improved education and schools are a necessary but not sufficient condition for economic development. While we need to improve the quality of our educational system that alone is not the solution-the quick fix-the miracle.

Let me return once again to the report of the organization for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD). This report identifies four areas of concern when discussing education and the economy in industrialized nations.

1. The "human factor" is assuming a pre-eminence as a factor of production. QUALIFICATIONS are becoming critical determinants of effective performance of enterprises and economics. Skills, qualifications, innovation, and personal adaptability assume greater importance.
2. Mastery of advanced technologies requires:
   - Workforce capable of applying advanced technologies;
   - Technologically literate consumers.
3. Very notion of what it means to be active in society is changing due to longer life spans.

Education preparing for an active society needs to be much more than simple preparation for working life. Life-long learning is becoming the norm worldwide.

4. Education is less synonymous than ever with schooling. Initial education not enough impact of corporate "training" programs.

Now let us look at these four identified needs through a rural America "filter."

1. Qualifications, skills, innovation, and personal adaptability.

Rural America has always prided itself on a skilled, hard working labor force. To remain competitive however our labor force will need to become more innovative and adaptable.

2. Master of Advanced Technologies.

As a nation we have adapted to quite well to the information and technology age. Rural America however lags behind. This is partly the result of sparsity of population and geographic isolation. More often it is high of the "cost" of these new technologies. For instance, much of our current rural infrastructure of phone lines is not adequate to accommodate new technologies.

If rural America is to stay competitive the delivery of technology and technological innovations must be a priority for rural communities in this country. Only with availability will our rural citizenry be able to apply such advanced technologies, as well as begin a technologically literate consumer.

3. Lifelong Learning

Community colleges, community education, as well as other forms of lifelong learning, and quality of life enhancements have become more prevalent in rural communities. There is still much room for creativity and innovation in this area.

Often our rural schools are not utilized for community activities associated with lifelong learning. Interagency collaboration may help to elevate some of these barriers in order to provide our rural clientele with a higher quality of life.

4. Education is less synonymous than ever with schooling.

Graduating from high school has been viewed in many rural communities as the terminal education experience. A re-socialization process will be necessary if we are to capture the vitality and resourcefulness of our rural labor force.

Learning is a lifetime endeavor. Education (K-12) can no longer be viewed as enough. The rural workforce will require up-dating, and when necessary, retraining.

What emerges from the literature, both here in the U.S. and in the global context, are three essential roles of education and economic/community development:

1. Schools need to contribute to a flexible labor force, innovative management, research, and new blood for entrepreneurship.
2. Providing the stable general and vocational foundation of skills and competencies; opportunities for further education; training and retraining; a second chance opportunities to update and upgrade skills.
3. Providing the trained, adaptable and flexible labor forces in regions hit by structure change and unemployment.

To achieve these goals in rural America will require policy; both rural development policy and rural education policy. To begin with, it would be helpful if we were to make an attempt to have both a comprehensive rural development policy and rival education policy in this country.

However, a void in such policy does not exclude action on critical issues in the interim.

RURAL QUALITY OF LIFE:

Poverty

Current rural education legislation pending at the national level uses percentage of students living in poverty as part of the definition to identify rural schools. While it could be debated whether that is a relevant description of

"rural schools," poverty is however a real issue in rural communities in this country. The war on poverty was not won. Persistent poverty continues to impact rural citizenry in disappropriate numbers.

It could be argued that by addressing the poverty issue schools could be served. There is a very strong correlation between declining standardized test scores with the number of children living below the poverty level. Two years ago when examining state achievement scores and income levels such a correlation explained nearly 60% of the variance.

The question could be posed: Perhaps for every dollar spent on eradicating poverty, would that be equivalent to spending 60 cents toward improving education?

Poverty is not a question that most rural communities or rural schools can address adequately at the local level. Yet what occurs in the classroom does not happen in a social or cultural vacuum. Poverty affects each and every part of the basic building blocks of Community Development (Figure 1).

Delivery of Social Services

Policy constraints often are placed on more innovative means of delivering social services to rural areas, usually designed or adapted from urban models with little utility in rural America. Schools could play a networking role if policy changes were made. Use of facilities for community events, delivery of services, or community centers.

Such changes would allow schools to become a life-long service provider to the community, meeting the needs of the broader community.

LIFELONG LEARNING POLICY

- More opportunity for experiential education; changing state policy that constrains using the community as a learning laboratory.
- Regional post-secondary education and training institutions must strengthen relationship with rural public schools and their communities need to look at funding policies and accountability mechanisms to erase the current reality of competition.

PUBLIC EDUCATION POLICIES

Education Reform Legislation

- Needs to be weighed against reality of rural. Many policies are potentially harmful to rural schools.

Teacher Training

- Need a rural context in teacher training — rural not second rate or substandard.
- Information on rural communities.

Technology

- Flexibility in state mandates and financial assistance from state should be given to rural schools to make the new technologies.

These policy suggestions are likely to be difficult to implement. Nothing of substance ever comes free. These policy changes will require school district, community, state and federal level.

We need to ensure that our schools and rural communities are responsive to the demands of economic, technological and structural change, and indeed to contribute to the process of change. Now, more than ever schools must impart a broad base of transferrable skills. The future of rural America, its schools and communities is in our hands.

It is up to us to voice our concerns to our policy makers to formulate rural education and development policies. Such policies would provide the guidelines that would allow for rural America to draw the best out of our communities and our schools.

Only then will those living in rural America will be able to fully claim ownership in their future.

Sue Raftery is Extension Sociologist ath the Cooperative Extension Systems, Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama.